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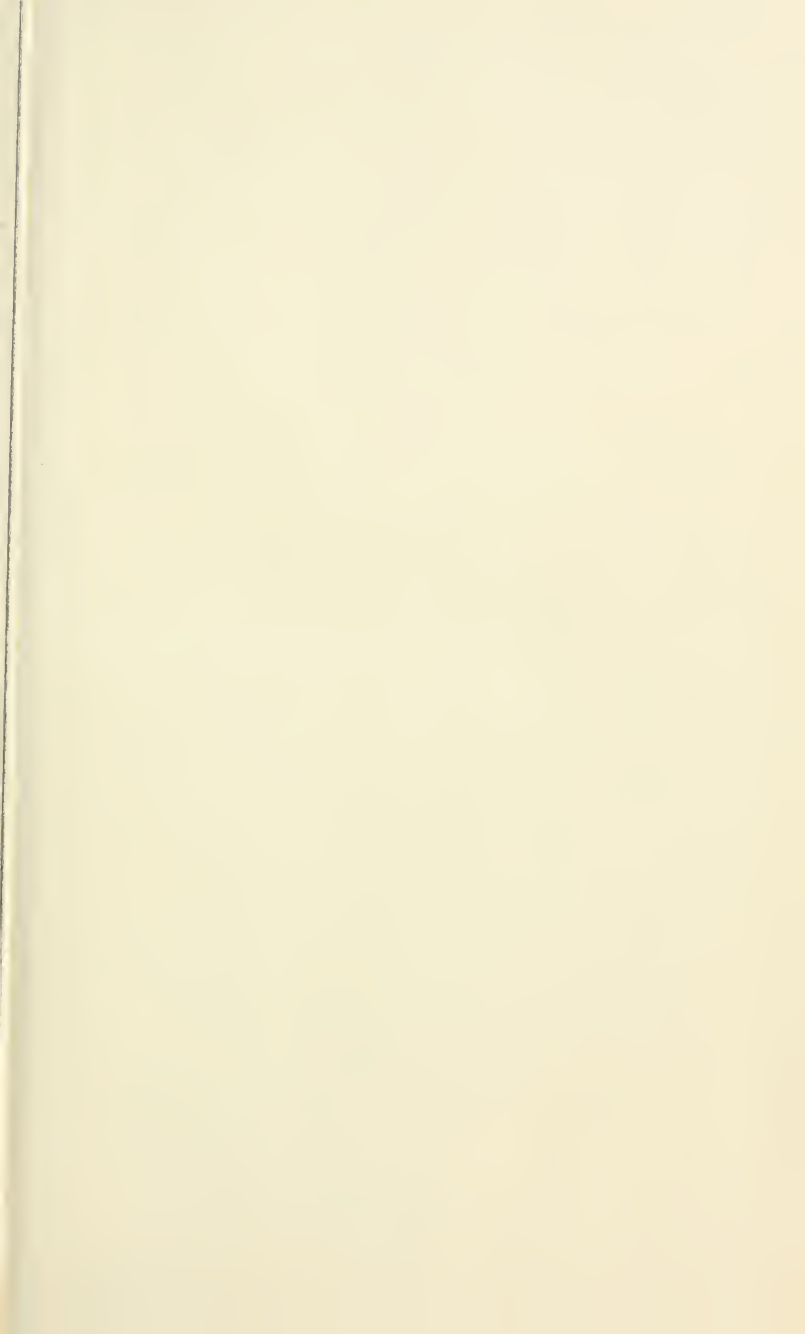
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The
Italian Novelists.

BY THOMAS ROSCOE.

VOL. III.



Drawn by J. Mills.

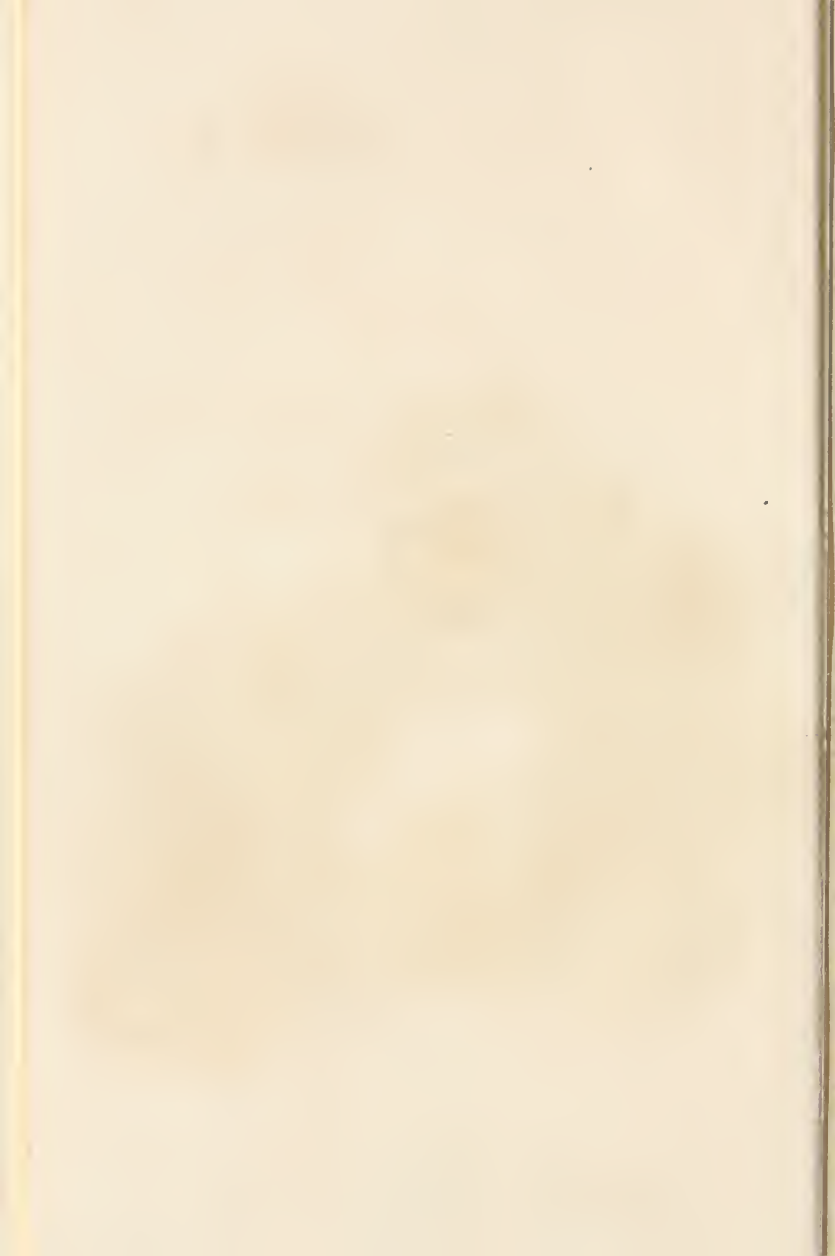
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THE
ITALIAN NOVELISTS.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

J. M. Creery, Took's-court,
Chancery-lane, London.

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OF THE

THIRD VOLUME.

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Novels of Matteo Bandello.

VOL. III.

B



MATTEO BANDELLO.

ONE of the most favourite novelists of Italy belonging to the sixteenth century, and the most esteemed, with the single exception of Boccaccio, in other countries, next claims our attention. Matteo Bandello was born at Castelnovo, in the district of Tortona; though his chief residence was at Milan. He is there supposed to have produced the greatest part of his novels, until, alarmed at the frequent revolutionary commotions which agitated that city, then a prey to internal discord and foreign violence, he sought refuge in the French territories, not far from Agen, in company with his friend Cesare Fregoso. Here, in the castle of Bassen, he devoted himself with ardor to the restoration and revision of various productions, which had been either mutilated or destroyed by the incendiaries who had set fire to his house in Milan. It was with difficulty, that through the medium of some of his friends, he rescued a portion of his novels from the hands of the ruffians, who in ransacking his house, found little other spoil than the fruits of his literary labours. On losing his

friend Fregoso, the companion of his retreat, who perished by assassination, he, in the year 1541, accepted the offer of Francis I., of the bishopric of Agen, to which he was accordingly appointed, and which he retained until the period of his death, which happened subsequently to the year 1555. It is said, but without sufficient foundation, that his life was protracted to the year 1561. His novels first appeared at Lucca, 1554, in quarto. They consist of four parts; the first, second, and third parts containing fifty-nine stories, and the fourth, twenty-eight; so that Bandello is to be considered as ranking at the same time among the best and the most voluminous of the Italian novelists. The work is dedicated to Ippolita Sforza, consort of Alessandro Bentivoglio, for whose amusement it is said to have been first undertaken; but she died before it was completed. The stories are, for the most part, rather drawn from historical incidents, than from the invention of the writer. He addresses them severally to some distinguished individual, independent of the general dedication; and he is always anxious to acquaint his reader with the event which gave rise to them, and to induce him to believe, that they are less imaginary than true. In general, he asserts that they are derived from stories which he heard related in com-

pany, and which he reports as exactly as he can, with the conversation which led to them. In regard to his style, if he does not deserve to be placed amongst the best writers, he is yet beyond mediocrity. He has been blamed, not without reason, for the inelegance and carelessness of his diction, and he may be considered as inferior in this respect to many less celebrated novelists of his day. The same negligence is also perceptible in the narration of his incidents; as an excuse for which, it has been observed by Echard, with an amusing simplicity, that we ought to recollect that he only undertook to transcribe his stories as he heard them repeated from the lips of others. The author, however, modestly disclaims all title to elegance of language, observing that being a native of Lombardy, he was quite ignorant of the beauties of the Tuscan style. His novels have been translated into almost every tongue.

MATTEO BANDELLO.

PART I. NOVELLA LVII.*

IT is really superfluous, my noble friends and patrons, to use so many kind entreaties, when a single word from you would be enough, by way of command, to induce me, as you seem to wish, to give some account of my most remarkable adventures, in addition to what you have already heard of my travels in Africa. With the manners and customs of the people, as well as with their peculiar religious opinions, I believe you are now pretty well acquainted, insomuch that I no longer need to dwell upon these. You are aware that I have been a traveller from the time I was a boy of fifteen, when I set out from my native city of Genoa, in company with

* We are told by Mr. Dunlop that the incident of the monarch losing his way in the chase, is also related in the *Fabliaux*, as well as in many of the old English ballads, and probably had its origin in some adventure of the Caliph Haroun Alraschid. The tale of Bandello is the origin of *Le Roi et le Fermier*, of M. Sedaine.—*History of Fiction*, vol. iii. p. 461.

Messer Niccolo Cattanio, whose extensive mercantile connexions induced him to visit various parts of Barbary. With him I first arrived at the city of Orano, situated on the shores of the Mediterranean, and belonging to the kingdom of the same name. Numbers of the Genoese were accustomed to resort thither, and there is a large place of traffic named from that circumstance the Lodge of the Genoese. My friend, Cattanio, was highly respected there, and even in great credit with the king; so much so as to have obtained various privileges from him, in consideration of the able and beneficial manner in which he promoted the commerce of his subjects. Residing there during several years, I acquired an excellent knowledge of the language, manners, and peculiar practices of the people, when I was at length prevailed upon to join a party of Oranese merchants, to whom I had been recommended, through Cattanio's influence, by their king. They were men of approved worth, and of the kindest manners, and with them I prepared to make a commercial tour through the country, visiting various regions of Africa, in which we discovered many great and populous cities. In several of these countries we met with seminaries of instruction, with their regular professors of different sciences, paid and appointed by the people.

There are, moreover, different hospitals instituted for the relief of the impoverished and distressed, who are there supplied with a regular subsistence, it being a principle of their religion to bestow alms, as pleasing in the sight of God. And I solemnly aver, that I have met with more instances of true charity and kindness from what are termed these uncivilized people, than I ever had the good fortune to do among those who are called Christians. Among other splendid places, I visited a noble city, built in the age of king Mansor, who had likewise been supreme pontifex, or high priest of Morocco. Some of their national chronicles were here exhibited to me, composed in the Arabic character, which bore ample witness to the diligence with which they record the most remarkable public events. Being very well versed in the language, I amused myself with perusing various portions of them; but more particularly those relating to the times of king Mansor. I thence learned that among other amusements he was immoderately fond of the chase; and it one day so happened that being on a hunting excursion, he was surprised by a terrific storm, which, with irresistible fury, laying waste both corn and wood lands, soon dispersed his courtiers on all sides, in search of shelter. Mistaking his way, in the confusion which ensued, king Mansor, separated

at length from his companions, wandered through the forests until nightfall, and such was the tempestuous raging of the winds, that almost despairing of finding shelter, he checked his steed, doubtful which way he should venture to proceed. From the terrific darkness of the sky, relieved only by sheets of flashing light, shooting across the far horizon, he was fearful of going further, lest he should incur still greater danger, either by riding into pit-falls, or the deep marshes bordering the forest grounds. As he thus stood, listening to the distant thunder, and the raving of the storm, he stretched his view in vain, to discover some signs of human existence ; until, on proceeding a few more steps, a light suddenly appeared, at only a short distance from him. It was from the window of a poor fisherman's hut, who earned his livelihood by catching eels in the adjacent pools and marshes. On hearing the voice of the king, who rushed forward with a shout of joy, on beholding a human habitation, the fisherman hastened to the assistance of the bewildered traveller, whom he believed to have lost his way in the storm. Inquiring who called, King Mansor approached near, and entreated him, if he possessed the least charity, to direct him the shortest path to the residence of the monarch. "The king's court," replied the poor man,

“is distant from this place above ten long miles.”—
“Yet I will make it worth your trouble, friend, to guide me thither: consent to oblige me, and you shall have no reason to complain,” said the king. “Though you were King Mansor himself,” returned the fisherman, “who entreated as much, I would not venture upon it at this hour of the night, and such a night as this is; for I should render myself guilty, perhaps, of leading our honoured monarch into destruction. The night is dark, and the waters are out around us.”—“But why should you, friend, be so very solicitous about the safety of the king?”—“Oh,” replied the good man, “because I honour him more than I do any one else, and love him more than myself.”—“But what good has he ever done you?” asked the king, “that you should hold him in such high esteem. Methinks you would be rather more comfortably lodged and clothed, were you any extraordinary favourite of his.”—“Not so,” answered the fisherman; “for tell me, sir knight, what greater favour can I receive from my honoured king, in my humble sphere, than to be protected in the enjoyment of my house and goods, and the little earnings which I make? All I have I owe to his kindness, to the wisdom and justice with which he rules over his subjects, preserving us in peace or protecting us in war

from the inroads of the Arabs, as well as all other enemies. Even I, a poor fisherman, with a wife and little family, am not forgotten, and enjoy my poverty in peace. He permits me to fish for eels wherever I please, and take them afterwards to the best market I can find, in order to provide for my little ones. At any hour, night or day, I go out, or I come in, just as I like, to or fro, in my humble dwelling; and there is not a single person, in all these neighbouring woods and valleys, who has ever dared to do me wrong. To whom am I indebted for all this, but to him for whom I daily offer up my prayers to God and our holy prophet to watch over his preservation? But why do I talk, when I see you, sir knight, before me, dripping from the pelting of this pitiless storm? Deign to come within, and receive what shelter my poor cabin will afford; to-morrow I will conduct you to the king, or wherever else you please."

Mansor now freely availed himself of the invitation, and dismounting from his horse, sought refuge from the still raging storm. The poor steed, likewise, shared the accommodation prepared in a little out-house for the good man's ass, partaking of the corn and hay. Seated by the side of a good fire, the king was employed in drying himself, and recruiting his exhausted strength, while the wife was busily

cooking the eels for his royal supper. When they were served, having a decided distaste for fish, he somewhat anxiously inquired, whether there was no kind of meat for which he might exchange them? The fisherman very honestly declared, that it was true he had a she-goat with a kid; and perceiving that his guest was no unworthy personage, he directly offered to serve it up to table; which having done, he presented the king with those parts generally esteemed the best and the most delicious. After supper, the monarch retiring to his rustic couch, reposed his wearied limbs, and slumbered until the sun was up.

At the appointed hour he once more mounted his steed, attended by his kind host, who now took upon himself the office of a guide. They had scarcely proceeded beyond the confines of the marshes, when they encountered several of the king's party, calling aloud in the utmost anxiety, and searching for their royal master in every direction. Unbounded was the joy and congratulation of the courtiers on thus meeting with him safe and uninjured. The king then turning round to the poor fisherman, informed him that he was the monarch whom he had so much praised, and whom he had so humanely and honourably received the foregoing evening: and that

he might rely upon him, that his singular courtesy and good-will should not go unrewarded.

Now there were certain hunting-lodges which the king had erected in those parts for the convenience which they afforded in his excursions: and several of his nobles had likewise adorned the surrounding country with various seats and other dwellings, so as to give a pleasing relief to the prospect. With the view of bestowing a handsome remuneration upon the good fisherman, the grateful monarch gave orders that the pools and marshes adjacent to these dwellings should be drained. He then circumscribed the limits of a noble city, comprehending the palaces and houses already erected, and after conferring upon it various rich immunities, by which it shortly became both very populous and powerful, he named the place Cesar Elcibir, or the Great Palace, and presented it as a token of his gratitude to the honest fisherman.

At the period when his sons succeeded to it, no city throughout the king's dominions was to be compared with it, in point of splendour and beauty of appearance. During the time I remained there, it was filled with merchants and artisans of every description. The mosques were extremely grand, nor were the colleges and hospitals less worthy of admiration.

As they have but few good wells, the cisterns and other public conduits are very large and numerous. The inhabitants of the places I visited are in general liberal and kind-hearted men, of simple manners, and neat and plain in their dress and appearance. The gardens are at once spacious and beautiful, abounding in all kinds of fruits, which supply a weekly market, the emporium of all the surrounding country. It is situated not above eighteen miles distant from Azella, now called Arzilla, in the possession of the Portuguese.

Now, simple as the whole of this story may appear, it will at least be found to inculcate one beautiful moral ; it teaches us to behave with courtesy towards every one, courtesy being like virtue, its own reward, and sure of meeting, sooner or later, as in the instance of the poor fisherman, that reward here below.

PART III. NOVELLA X.

IN the castle of Moncaliero, not far from the city of Turin, there dwelt a widow lady of the name of Zilia Duca, whose consort died before she had attained her twenty-fourth year. Though extremely beautiful, her manners were somewhat abrupt, resembling rather those of a pretty rustic, than of a polished city dame. She devoted herself to the education and future welfare of an only son, between three and four years old, and relinquished all idea of again entering into the marriage state. Entertaining somewhat narrow and avaricious views, she kept as small an establishment as she could, and performed many menial offices, usually left to the management of domestics. She rarely received or returned visits; stealing out on the appointed fasts early in the morning to attend mass at an adjoining church, and returning home in the same private manner. Now it was a general custom with the ladies in that part of the world, whenever strangers happened to arrive at their residence, to grant them a salute by way of welcome to their roof. But the lady of whom we speak, proved for once an exception to this general and hospitable

rule. For Messer Filiberto da Virle, a gentleman and a soldier of distinguished prowess and esteem, stopping at Moncaliero, on his way to Virle, chanced also to attend mass at the same church where Madonna Zilia was to be seen. Charmed with her graceful and attractive air, no less than with the beauty of her countenance, he eagerly inquired who she was ; and though little pleased with the avaricious character which he heard attributed to her, he tried in vain to efface the impression she had made. He pursued, however, his journey to Virle, where, after transacting his affairs, he resolved to retrace his steps to Moncaliero, not very far distant, and take up his residence there for some time. With this view he took a house not far from the castle, availing himself of every opportunity of throwing himself into the lady's way, and resolved at all risks, and whatever might be the labour, to induce her to relinquish the unsociable conduct of which she was accused.

After feasting his eyes long and vainly in her sight, he, at length, contrived to obtain the pleasure of an introduction ; but she had scarcely spoken two words to him, when she excused herself, and retreated, as usual, home. In truth she had been short with him, and he felt it in such a way, that he made a strong resolution, which he almost as suddenly broke, of

renouncing all thoughts of her for ever. He next enlisted some of her own sex, among her most intimate acquaintance, to employ their influence with her, to vanquish her obduracy, in order that, after having carried the outworks, he might take the castle of Moncaliero by storm. But the enemy was on the alert, and all his efforts proved abortive. He looked, he sighed, he wrote, he went to mass, he walked before and behind the castle, in the woods, by the river side, where he threatened to drown himself; but the lady's heart was more impregnable than a rock, harder than every thing except his own fate; for she deigned neither to smile upon, nor to write to him. What should the wretched lover do? He had already lost his appetite, his complexion, and his rest, besides his heart; and really felt very unwell. Though physicians were not the persons to prescribe for such a case, they were nevertheless called in, and made him a great deal worse; for he was now rapidly advancing towards that bourne, from which neither lovers nor travellers return; and without other help, it became very evident that the poor young gentleman would soon give up the ghost.

While his life hung suspended in this languishing state, one of his friends and fellow officers, a happy

fellow from Spoleto, hearing of his condition, came posting to his succour, determined at least to be in time for his funeral, and see that all due military honours were paid to his loving spirit. When he arrived, Messer Filiberto had just strength enough to tell the story of his love, and the cruel disdain of the lady, intending afterwards, as he assured his friend, to think no more about it, but quietly to expire. His friend, however, having really a regard for him, and believing he would grow wiser as he grew older, strongly dissuaded him from the latter alternative, observing that he ought to think about it ; that it was a point of honour, on which he ought to pique himself, to bring it, like a good comedy, to a happy conclusion. “ My poor Filiberto,” he continued, “ leave the affair to me, and be assured you shall speak to her as much as you please.” —“ That is all I wish,” exclaimed the patient, with a little more animation, while a slight colour suffused his cheek ; “ persuade her only to listen to me, and, trust me, I can manage the rest myself. But it is all a deception. What can you do, when I have wasted all kinds of love messages, gifts, oaths, and promises, in vain ?” —“ Do you get well ; that is all you have to do,” returned our Spoletino, “ and leave the rest to me.” He spoke with so much confidence that the

patient in a short time grew wonderfully better ; and when the physician a few days afterwards stepped in, he gave himself infinite credit for the improvement which had taken place. Now the reader must know that the wits of Spoleto are renowned all over Italy ; they are the most loose-tongued rattlers, the most diligent petitioners for alms, in the name of St. Antony ; the most audacious, and slight-of-hand gentry in the world. They have a very excellent gift of talking, and making something out of nothing ; and no less of persuading people to be of their own opinion, almost against their will. Nearly the whole of that amusing generation, who are in the habit of getting through the world, by easing the rich and the simple of their superfluous cash, who dance upon two poles, dole out the grace of Saint Paul, charm the dancing serpents, or sing wicked songs in the public streets, will be found to trace their birth to Spoleto.

Messer Filiberto's friend was well qualified, therefore, as a relation of these itinerant wits, to assist a brother in distress ; especially in such a dilemma as that in which our hero found himself. Considering him, at length, sufficiently convalescent, our Spoletino fixed upon a sort of travelling pedlar, to forward the designs he had formed for the relief of

the unhappy lover. Bribing him to exchange dresses, he took possession, for a period, of his collection of wares, consisting of every article most tempting to a woman's eyes, either for ornament or for use. Thus armed, he set out in the direction of Donna Zilia's residence, announcing himself as the old travelling merchant, with a fresh supply of the choicest goods. These tidings reaching the ears of the lady, she sent to desire him to call at her house, which he directly entered with the utmost familiarity, as if by no means for the first time, and addressed her in the most courteous language he could command. Then opening his treasures, she entered upon a review of the whole assortment, displacing and undervaluing every thing, while she purchased nothing. At length, fixing her eyes upon some beautiful veils and ribbons, of which she fancied she was in want, she inquired how much he expected for such very ordinary articles? "If you will sell them, good man, for what they are really worth, I will take no less than five-and-thirty yards; but if you ask too much, I will not look at them, I will not have a single ell."—"My lady," replied the false merchant, "do my veils indeed please you? They are at your service, and say nothing as to the price; it is already paid. And not only these, but the whole of this excellent assort-

ment is your own, if you will but deign to receive it.”—“No, no, not so,” cried the lady, “that would not be right; I thank you, good man; though I certainly should like to have them at as low a rate as I can. So ask what you please, and I will give what I please, and then we shall understand one another: you gain your livelihood in this way, and surely it would be cruel, however much I might wish it, to take them for nothing. So deal fairly with me, and I will give you what I think the goods are really worth.”—“But, your ladyship, please you,” replied the wary merchant, “I shall consider it no loss, but a favour, if you will condescend to receive them, under no conditions at all. And I am sure, if you possess as courteous a mind as your face betokens, you will accept these trifles, presented to you on the part of one, who would gladly lay down, not only his whole property, but his life at your feet.” At these words the lady “blushing celestial rosy red,” eyed the merchant keenly for a moment: “I am astonished to hear you talk thus; and I insist upon knowing who you really are. There is some mystery in all this, and I am rather inclined to think you must have mistaken the person to whom you speak.” The merchant, however, not in the least abashed, being a native of Spoleto, acquainted her in the mildest and most flattering

terms, with the long and passionate attachment entertained for her by poor Messer Filiberto, and the delicacy with which he had concealed it until the very last. Handsome, accomplished, rich, and powerful, he was prepared to lay all his extensive seignories at her feet, and account himself the most fortunate of mankind. In short, he pleaded so eloquently, and played his part so well, that she at length, after a pretty long resistance, consented to see his friend. He then hastened back to Messer Filiberto, who overwhelmed him with the most rapturous thanks, and lost no time in preparing to pay a visit to his beloved, who received him at the appointed hour in the drawing-room of her own house. There was a single maid-servant in her company, who sat at work in a recess, so that she could scarcely overhear their discourse.

Bending lowly before her, Messer Filiberto expressed his deep sense of the honour she had conferred on him, and proceeded in impassioned terms to relate the origin and progress of his affection, his almost unexampled sufferings, and the sole hope which still rendered his life supportable to him. He further assured her, that his gratitude would be eternal; in proportion to the amount of the obligations under which she laid him. The sole reply which he received to

his repeated and earnest protestations, was, that she was resolved to remain faithful to the memory of her departed consort, and devote herself to the education of her only son. She was, moreover, grateful for his good opinion, though she was sure he could not fail to meet with ladies far more beautiful and more worthy of his regard. Finding that all his efforts proved quite fruitless, and that it was impossible to make any impression, he threw himself once more at her feet, with tears in his eyes, declaring that, if she possessed the cruelty to deprive him of all hope, he should not long survive. The lady remained silent, and Messer Filiberto then summoning his utmost pride and fortitude to his aid, prepared to take his leave ; beseeching her only in the common courtesy and hospitality of the country, to grant him in return for his long love and sufferings, a single kiss, which, against all social laws, she had before denied him ; although it was generally yielded to all strangers who entered an hospitable roof. " I wish," replied Donna Zilia, " I knew whether your affection for me is so strong as you pretend, for then, if you will but take a vow to observe one thing, I will grant what you require. I shall then believe I am truly beloved, but never till then." The lover eagerly swore to observe the conditions she should impose,

and seized the price of the promise he had given. "Now, Signor Filiberto," exclaimed the lady, "prepare to execute the cruel sentence I shall impose. It is my will and pleasure that you no longer trouble me with such entreaties for the future, at least for some time; and if you are a true knight, you will not again unseal your lips for the space of three years." The lover was greatly surprised and shocked, on hearing so harsh and unjust a sentence; though at the same time, he signified his submission by his silence, merely nodding his assent. Soon after, making the lady a low bow, he took his departure for his own residence. There, taking the affair into his most serious consideration, he at last came to the fixed resolution of submitting to this very severe penalty, as a punishment, at least, for his folly, in so lightly sporting with his oath. Suddenly, then, he became dumb, and feigning that he had met with some accident, he set out from Moncaliero, on his return to Virle. His friends, on finding him in this sad condition, expressed the utmost sorrow and surprise; but, as he retained his usual cheerfulness, and sense enough to conduct his own affairs, they corresponded with him as well as if he had retained the nine parts of speech. Committing his affairs to the conduct of his steward, a distant relation, in whom he had the highest confi-

dence, he determined to set out on a tour for France, to beguile, if possible, the irksomeness of his situation. Of an extremely handsome person, and possessing noble and imposing manners, the misfortune under which he appeared to labour was doubly regretted, wherever our hero made his appearance.

About the period of his arrival in France, Charles, the seventh of that name, was engaged in a warm and sanguinary war against the English, attempting to recover possession of the dominions which his predecessors had lost. Having already driven them from Gascony and other parts, he was busily preparing to follow up his successes in Normandy. On arriving at this sovereign's court, Messer Filiberto had the good fortune to find several of his friends among the barons and cavaliers in the king's service, from whom he experienced a very kind reception, which was rather enhanced by their knowledge of the cruel misfortune under which he laboured. But as it was not of such a nature as to incapacitate him for battle, he made signs that he wished to enter into the king's body guards; and being a knight of well known prowess, this resolution was much applauded, no less by his majesty than by all his friends. Having equipped himself in a suitable manner he accompanied a division of the army intended to carry Rouen by

assault. Here he performed such feats of strength and heroic valour in the presence of the king, as to excite the greatest admiration; and on the third attack the place was carried by storm. His majesty afterwards inquiring more particularly into the history of the valiant knight, and learning that he was one of the lords of Virle in Piedmont, instantly conferred upon him an office in his royal household, and presented him with a large sum of money as an encouragement to persevere in the noble career he had commenced, observing at the same time, that he trusted some of his physicians would be enabled to remove the impediment in his speech. Our hero, smiling at this observation, expressed his gratitude for these royal favours as well as he could; shaking his fist at the same time, in token that he would punish his majesty's adversaries. Soon after, a sharp skirmish occurred between the French and the enemy for the possession of a bridge. The affair becoming serious, and the trumpets sounding to arms, the king, in order to encourage his troops, galloped towards the spot: Talbot, the commander of the English forces, was already there, and had nearly obtained possession of the bridge. His majesty was in the act of encouraging his soldiers, when Messer Filiberto, on his black charger, passed him at full

speed with his company. With his lance in rest, he rode full at the horse of Talbot, which fell to the ground. Then seizing his huge club, and followed by his companions, he made such terrible havoc among the English, that, dealing death in every blow, he shortly dispersed them on all sides, and compelled them to abandon their position on the bridge. It was with difficulty that their commander himself effected his escape; while king Charles, following up his success, in a short time obtained possession of the whole of Normandy.

On this occasion the king returned public thanks to the heroic Filiberto, and in the presence of all the first nobility of his kingdom, invested him with the command of several castles, with a hundred men at arms to attend him. He now stood so high in favour at court, that the monarch spared no expense to obtain the first professional advice that could be found in every country, with the hope of restoring him to the use of speech; and, after holding a solemn tournament in honour of the French victories, he proclaimed a reward of ten thousand francs to be paid to any physician, or other person, who should be fortunate enough to discover the means of restoring the use of speech to a dumb cavalier, who had lost his voice in a single night. The fame of this reward reaching as far

as Italy, many adventurers, induced by the hope of gain, sallied forth to try their skill, however vainly, since it was impossible to make him speak against his will. Incensed at observing such a concourse of people at his court, under the pretence of performing experiments on the dumb gentleman, until the whole capitol became infested with quacks, his majesty ordered a fresh proclamation to go forth, stating, that whoever undertook to effect the cure, should thenceforth, in case of failing to perform what he promised, be put to death, unless he paid down the sum of ten thousand francs. The good effect of this regulation was quickly perceived, in the diminution of pretenders to infallible cures, few caring to risk their fortunes or their lives, in case of their inability to pay, though they had before been so liberal of their reputation. When the tidings of Messer Filiberto's good fortune and favour at the French king's court reached Moncaliero, Donna Zilia, imagining that his continued silence must be solely owing to the vow he had taken, and the time being at length nearly expired, fancied it would be no very bad speculation to secure the ten thousand francs for herself. Not doubting but that his love remained still warm and constant, and that she really possessed the art of removing the dumbness at her pleasure, she resolved

to lose no time in setting off directly for Paris, where she was introduced to the commissioners appointed to preside over Messer Filiberto's case. "I am come, my lords," she observed, "hearing that a gentleman of the court has for some time past lost his speech, to restore to him that invaluable faculty, possessing for that purpose some secret remedies, which I trust will prove efficacious. In the course of a fortnight he will probably be one of the most eloquent men at court; and I am quite willing to run the risk of the penalty, if I perform not my engagement as required. There must, however, be no witness to my proceedings; the patient must be entrusted entirely to me. I should not like every pretender to obtain a knowledge of the secret I possess; it is one which will require the utmost art in its application." Rejoiced to hear her speak with so much confidence on the subject, the commissioners immediately despatched a message to Messer Filiberto, informing him that a lady had just arrived from Piedmont, boasting that she could perform what the most learned of the faculty in France had failed to do, by restoring the dumb to speech. The answer to this, was an invitation to wait upon our hero at his own residence, when he recognized the cruel beauty who had imposed so severe a penance, and concluded at the same time that she had under-

taken the journey, not out of any affection for him, but with the most mercenary views. Reflecting on his long sufferings and unrequited affection, his love was suddenly converted into a strong desire of revenge: he therefore came to a determination of still playing the mute, and not deigning to exchange a single word with her, merely bowed to her politely at a distance. After some moments' silence, the lady, finding that he had no inclination to speak, inquired in a gentle tone whether he was at a loss to discover in whose company he was? He gave her to understand that he knew her perfectly well, but that he had not yet recovered his speech, motioning, at the same time, with his fingers towards his mouth. On this she informed him that she now absolved him from his vow, that she had travelled to Paris for that purpose, and that he might talk as much as he pleased. But the dumb lover, only motioning his thanks, still continued as silent as before; until the lady, losing all patience, very freely expressed her disappointment and displeasure. Still it availed her nothing, and fearful of the consequences to herself, if he persisted in his unaccountable obstinacy, she had at length recourse to caresses and concessions, which, whatever advantage he chose to take of them, proved ultimately as fruitless to restore his eloquence, as every other

means. The tears and prayers of the lady, to prevail upon him to speak, became now doubly clamorous ; while she sorely repented her former cruelty and folly, which had brought her into the predicament of forfeiting either ten thousand francs or her life. She would immediately have been placed under a military guard, had it not been for the intercession of the dumb gentleman, who made signs that they should desist. The penalty, however, was to be enforced ; but the lady, being of an excessively avaricious turn, resolved rather to die than to furnish the prescribed sum, and thus deprive her beloved boy of a portion of his inheritance. When reduced to this extremity, Messer Filiberto, believing that upon the whole he had sufficiently revenged himself, took compassion upon her sufferings, and hastened to obtain an audience of the king. He entreated as a special favour, that his majesty would remit the fine, and grant liberty to her, as well as to some other debtors, which, in the utmost surprise at hearing the sound of his voice, the king promised to do. He then proceeded to inform his majesty of the whole history of his attachment to the lady, and the strange results by which it had been attended to both parties, though fortunately all had ended well. Messer Filiberto then hastened to hold an audience with the lady, seriously proposing to give her

a little good advice; and she was quite as much rejoiced as his majesty, when she first heard him speak. "You may recollect, madam," he observed, "that some time ago, when at Moncaliero, I expressed the most ardent and constant attachment to you; an attachment which I did not then think that time could have ever diminished. But your conduct in cheating me into the vow of silence, and your cruelty to me, as well before that time as since, have wrought a complete change in my sentiments towards you. I have acquired wealth and honours; I stand high in the favour of my monarch; and having, I think, taken ample revenge upon you, by the fears and trouble you have experienced, I have not only granted you your liberty and your life, but ordered you to be freely supplied with every convenience and facility for your return home. I need not advise you to conduct yourself in future with care and prudence; in all the economical virtues you are reputed to be unrivalled; but I would venture to hint, that from the example I have in this instance afforded you, you will be more cautious how you sport with the feelings of those who love you, as it is an old saying, that the wily are often taken in their own nets." He then provided her with an honourable escort, and money to defray her expenses; while he himself, not long after,

received the hand of a young beauty of the court, bestowed upon him by his royal master. By this union he received an accession of several castles and domains, and sent for his witty young friend from Spoleto, to share with him a portion of his prosperity. Still retaining his favour at court, upon the death of Charles VII., he continued to enjoy the same appointments, and the same influence, under Lewis XI. his successor.

THIRD PART, NOVELLA XXXIX.

IN the time of Lodovico Sforza, the unfortunate Duke of Milan, there was kept, among other living curiosities in the ducal palace, a large and beautiful ape, whose amusing yet harmless manners, full of practical jests and witticisms, had long obtained for him the liberty of going at large. Such indeed was his reputation for prudence and good conduct, that he was not merely permitted the range of the whole palace, but frequently visited the outskirts, in the vicinity of Maine, of Cusano, and San Giovanni, and was not unfrequently seen conversing with some friend upon the walls. In fact most people were eager to shew their respect for him by presenting him with fruits and other dainties, no less from regard to his ducal patron, than to his own intrinsic merits. The singular pleasure he afforded to all classes of society, by his happy talents of various kinds, was always a sufficient passport from place to place. But his favourite resort, among many others, was the house of an ancient gentlewoman, situated in the parish of San Giovanni, upon the walls; where he cultivated the society of her two sons, one of

whom in particular, though at the head of a family, invariably received his monkey guest in the most amiable manner, making him as much at home as if he had been the lady's favourite lap-dog. These young men, perceiving their aged mother amused with the animal's unequalled exhibitions of his art, vied with each other in paying the most gratifying attentions to his monkeyship; and would certainly, had he not happened to have been ducal property, either have purchased or stolen him, merely out of regard to their mother. The whole household, likewise, received orders to treat him with the same invariable kindness and respect, studying what appeared most agreeable to his taste, so as to give him an affection for the old lady's house. This last motive weighed so greatly with his apeship, that he almost deserted his other neighbours, in order to enjoy more of the society of these very agreeable friends; although he was careful to return to his own ducal residence at the castle in the evening. During this time the aged lady becoming very infirm, no longer left her chamber, where she was affectionately attended by her whole family, who supplied her with every alleviation in the power of medical advice to bestow. Thither, occasionally, our facetious hero was also introduced for the purpose of awakening

a smile on the wan features of the patient, by his strange and amusing manners, receiving some delicate morsels in return from the poor lady's own hand. As he possessed a natural taste, in common with most of his race, for every kind of sweets, he was in the habit of besieging the old lady's room with great perseverance and assiduity, feasting upon the best confectionary with far higher zest than the poor patient herself. Worn out at length, by long infirmities and age, she soon after departed this world, having first with becoming piety confessed herself, and received the holy sacraments of our church, with the communion and extreme unction at the final close.

While the funeral ceremonies were preparing, and the last offices rendered to the deceased, the monkey appeared to pay remarkable attention to all that was going forward. The corpse being dressed, and placed on the funeral bier, the holy sisterhood then attended with the usual ceremonies, offering up hymns and aves to the Virgin for the soul of the deceased. The body was afterwards borne to the parish church not far distant, not unobserved by the monkey, who watched the procession depart. But he soon turned his attention to the state of things around him; and after feasting on the cake and wine,

being a little elevated, he began to empty the boxes and drawers, and examine the contents. Having observed the deceased in her last habiliments, and the form of her head-dress when she was laid out, the facetious ape immediately began to array himself in the cast-off garments, exactly in the manner he had witnessed; and so perfect was the resemblance, that when he had covered himself up in bed, the physician himself would have been puzzled to detect the cheat. Here the false patient lay, when the domestics entered the chamber; and suddenly perceiving the monkey thus dexterously laid out, they ran back in the utmost terror and surprise, believing that they had really seen either the corpse or the spirit of the deceased. After recovering sufficient presence of mind to speak, they declared, as they hoped to be saved, that they had seen their mistress reposing upon her sick couch as usual. On the return of the two brothers with their friends and relatives from church, they directly resolved to ascend in a body into the sick chamber; and night already approaching, they all felt, in spite of their affected indifference, an unpleasant sensation on entering the room. Drawing near the bed-side, they not only fancied they saw and heard a person breathe, but observing the co-

verings move, as if the patient were about to spring from the couch, they retreated with the utmost precipitation and alarm. When they had recovered their spirits a little, the guests requested that a priest might be sent for, to whom, on his arrival, they proceeded to explain the case. On hearing the nature of it, the good friar, being of a truly prudent and pious turn, despatched a person back for his clerk, with orders to bring him the large ivory crucifix, and the illuminated psalter. These, with the help of holy water, the wafer, and the priest's stole, were judged a sufficient match for the devices of the Evil One; and thus armed, repeating the seven psalms, with due ejaculations to the Virgin, they once more ascended the stairs, the clerk, in obedience to the friar, bearing the huge ivory crucifix at their head. He had previously exhorted the brothers to have no fears for the final salvation of their parent, as the number and excellence of her confessions were an effectual preservative against the most diabolical efforts of the adversary. He maintained that there was not the least cause for alarm, for what the servants had beheld were merely Satanic illusions, which he had frequently been in the habit of dispelling with singular success; and that having made use of his exorcisms, he would then bless the house, and

with the Lord's help, lay such a curse upon the bad spirits, as would deprive them of the least inclination to return.

When they arrived at the chamber-door, all the guests, in spite of these encouraging exhortations and the sprinkling of holy water, drew back, while the bold friar ordered his clerk to advance in the name of the Lord ; which he did, followed only by his superior. Approaching the sick bed, they perceived Monna Bertuccia, our facetious ape, laid out as we have said, in perfect personification of the deceased. After mumbling some prayers, and flourishing the cross in vain, for some time, they began to entertain doubts of their success, though at the same time they felt ashamed to retreat. So sprinkling the holy water with a more liberal hand, crying: "*Asperges me, domine; asperges me;*" they complimented the ape with a portion of it in his face. Expecting upon this to be next saluted with a blow of the huge cross, he suddenly began to grin and chatter in so horrible a manner, that the sacred vessel fell from the priest's hands, and the clerk at the same time dropping the crucifix, they both fled together. Such was their haste, that they stumbled, one over the other, down the stairs, the priest falling upon his clerk, when they reached the bottom.

On hearing the sudden crash, and the terrified exclamations of the good friar, "*Jesus, Jesus, Domine, adjuva me,*" the brothers, followed by the rest of the party, rushed towards the spot, eagerly inquiring what dreadful accident had occurred. Both of the holy personages gazed on the guests, without being able to utter a word; but their pallid looks spoke volumes sufficient to answer all demands. The poor clerk fainted away, no less from excess of fear than from the terrible fall he had just received. Having obliged both to partake of some restoratives, the priest at length summoned courage enough to say: "It is true, my dear children, I have indeed seen your poor departed mother in the form of a fierce demon;" when just as he had finished these words, the cause of all their disturbance, desirous of securing the remnants of the feast, was heard approaching at a pretty brisk and clattering pace down the unlucky stairs. Without giving any of the party time to discover a fresh place of refuge, or even to prepare their minds for his reception, he bounced suddenly into the room, armed cap-à-pie, in the fearful petticoats of the deceased. His head was dressed to a nicety exactly in the same manner as the old lady's, and his whole body very decently arrayed in her late habiliments. He placed himself in the midst of the

company, all of whom stood rooted to the spot, silent and awe-stricken, awaiting the dreadful scene that might ensue. The wrinkles in his countenance certainly bore no small resemblance to those in the features of the deceased, to which his very serious demeanour added not a little. Yet after a few secret ejaculations for divine protection on the part of the guests, the factious visitor was soon recognized by one of the brothers, the only person who had possessed courage to look the monkey in the face, on his sudden entrance into the room. Momentary prayers and exclamations were then as suddenly converted into bursts of laughter; and in a few minutes, the author of all their sufferings began to resume the usual hilarity of his disposition, to exhibit his best manœuvres in the saltic art, and with the greatest politeness, severally to accost the company. He evinced, however, the utmost aversion to disrobing himself of his new honours, snapping at any one who ventured to approach him, while he performed his antics in the ablest and most whimsical manner. In full dress he thus set out on his return to the castle, meeting with reiterated plaudits, as he passed along the streets. In this state, he was welcomed home by the domestics of the castle, producing infinite diversion among the courtiers, and all those who witnessed his exploits. Nor did

the two brothers punish him for his involuntary fault; rather kindly permitting him to return to his old haunts, where he feasted and frolicked away his days, until he attained to a happy and respectable old age.

FOURTH PART, NOVELLA XVIII.

DURING the period of my captivity among the Turks, which continued more than forty years, I was conducted by different masters into various places, more especially throughout Greece, whose most rich and beautiful regions are subjected to the Mahometan sway. It was there that I met with an instance, which may be enumerated with advantage amongst the most celebrated stories on record, of the courageous conduct of noble ladies, at different periods of history. The incident, of which I am about to speak, arose out of the siege of Coccino, situated in the island of Lemnos, invaded at that time by the Turkish armament from the Egean sea. Having in vain attempted to storm Lepanto, all the efforts of the infidels were now directed against the walls of Coccino, which were battered with such united strength and fury, that one of the chief gates at length falling with a loud crash, the Turks rushed exultingly forward to secure their entrance. This was as bravely disputed by the Venetian soldiers, assisted by the inhabitants, and even by the women of the place, who vied with each other in risking their lives, in order

to avoid the outrages of the Mahometan soldiery. There was a certain warrior named Demetrius, a native of the town, who distinguished himself on this occasion above all his comrades, by the fearless valour with which he confronted the fiercest of the enemy. Standing the very foremost man, and hurling the infidels back from the gate with incredible strength and prowess, the gateway was already half-blocked up with the slain, and he still continued to exhort his countrymen to the fight, until, pierced with a thousand wounds, he fell upon the dead bodies of his enemies.

Among the women who displayed the courage of the bravest warriors, was a daughter of this hero, who, in the act of encouraging the soldiers to follow to her father's rescue, witnessed his fall. She was of a noble and imposing figure, and though only in her twentieth year, evinced the utmost fortitude under the perils which surrounded her. Her name was Marulla, and she was no less strikingly beautiful than intrepidly courageous. Instead of yielding herself up to lamentations and despair, on beholding the heroic fate of her sire, she exhorted his fellow-citizens to revenge his death, and, seizing his sword, led them forward with increased energy to the attack. With the rage of a hungry lioness, springing upon a herd of cattle, she fell upon the nearest of her foes,

dealing death on all sides, in the name and with the spirit of her father. In the enthusiasm of the moment, numbers of her own sex, following her example, encouraged the soldiers to make fresh exertions; and such was the impression produced by this conduct that the invaders were speedily overpowered, and driven to take refuge in their ships. Those who had not the good fortune to escape, were indiscriminately put to the sword, and thus, by the heroic example of a single woman, the chief city and the whole island of Lemnos were relieved from the invasion of the infidels. I was myself told by their commander Morsbecco, one of their most able and distinguished captains, during the time I was a prisoner at Constantinople, when he was giving an account of this desperate engagement, that as soon as he beheld the Grecian heroine rushing amidst the thickest of his troops, he felt as if all his former courage and confidence had forsaken him; a circumstance which he never recollected to have happened to him, during the numerous battles and campaigns in which he had been engaged. On the liberation of the island, Antonio Loredano, the Venetian admiral, arriving with a strong force, and hearing of the extraordinary exploits of the maiden Marulla, immediately requested to be introduced to her, when he expressed the great-

est admiration, both of her conversation and appearance. In presence of the Venetian soldiers and the citizens of Coccino, he next bestowed the highest praises on her unequalled generosity and heroism, her filial affection and other virtues, for all of which she was so proudly distinguished. He then presented her with several rich gifts on the part of the republic, and his example was immediately followed by the commanders of the different galleys, and by the people of the island, who vied with each other in laying their contributions at her feet. When more than sufficient for a handsome marriage portion had been collected, the admiral proceeded to address the young heroine in the following words: "Most excellent and noble lady, in order to convince you of the sincerity with which our Venetian senate is ever inclined to honour real worth, in whichever sex it may be found, and to display its gratitude for the obligations conferred upon it, I have here offered you these slight tokens of its regard. Deign to accept them as an earnest only of higher rewards, when I shall have forwarded to our noble senators a more particular account of the splendid actions you have performed in defence of their territories, and of the country to which you owe your birth. In the meantime, bright and beautiful as you are brave, should

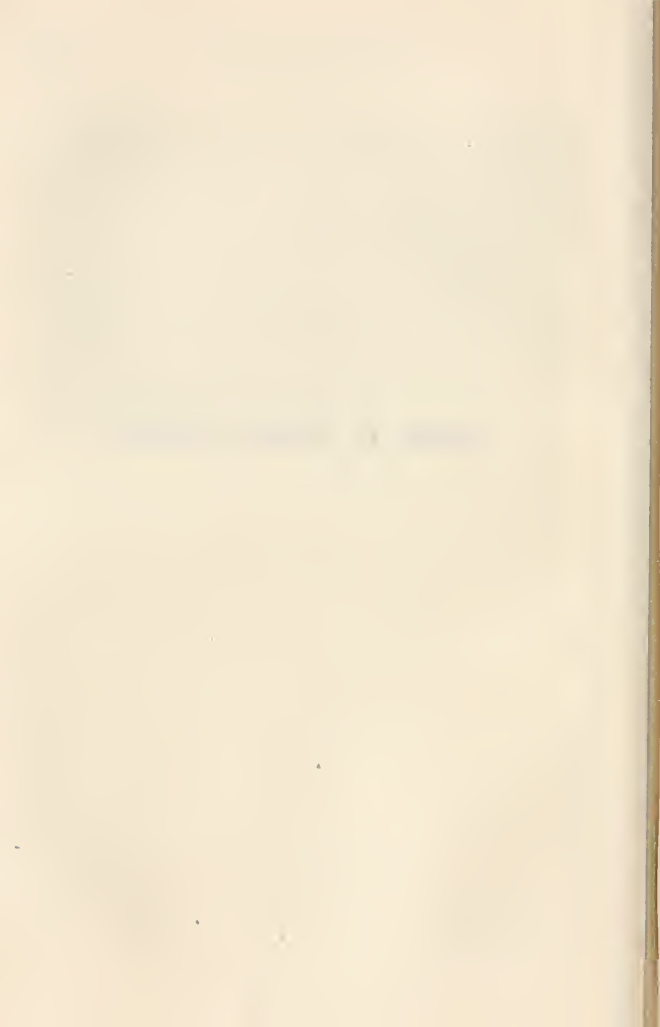
you deign to cast your eye on the first and proudest of your countrymen, who have combated at your side, be assured that he will feel himself honoured by such a preference, and that his interests will be nobly promoted by our senate of Venice !”

In returning her grateful thanks to the admiral and the Venetian republic, for the generous consideration of her poor services, the maiden heroine, in reference to the last article of their proposals, replied, that high as she estimated true bravery, it was by no means superior physical courage and daring deeds in man which constituted his highest claims to her regard. These, without the still nobler attributes of an intellectual and moral character, were nearly worthless in her eyes ; when destitute of those virtues which embellish an unstained and upright life, and produce great and honourable actions.

Repeated plaudits and commendations from all ranks of people, immediately followed this truly noble and beautiful reply ; the admiral afterwards declaring, that the innate worth and wisdom exhibited in her language and demeanour, had not merely surpassed his expectations, but deserved to be compared with the happiest instances of feminine excellence and accomplishments, recorded in the annals either of Greece or Rome.

An accurate and eloquent account of the whole of this interesting scene was shortly after despatched to the noble senators of Venice, who entering upon a consideration of the singular merits of their fair champion, not only decreed that her espousals should be splendidly provided for, and celebrated by the republic, but that numerous privileges and exemptions from the public burdens imposed upon her fellow subjects, should be likewise secured to her and to her children for evermore.

Novels of Gentile Sermini.



GENTILE SERMINI.

It has been a fertile source of dispute among the historical critics of Italy, more especially those of Sienna, to fix the precise period in which this writer flourished. This would appear, in a great measure, to have arisen from the novelist's own desire to antedate his productions, conferring upon them a more antiquated style and character, (doubtless in order to rank in the list of earlier and purer writers,) than was usual with the less studied novelists of his own day. Thus, if we are to give credit to his own account, as contained in a MS. discovered, and treated of by Apostolo Zeno, in his Annotations upon Fontanini, he must have flourished about the time of Boccaccio, to whom, in order to give more probability to his story, he directs a letter; and the frequent allusions, throughout his work, would lead us to suppose that he wrote about the year 1349. Upon the authority of Zeno, we are bound to believe that he really lived during the middle or latter half of the fifteenth century, while by others he is referred to a still later period. From the same author we learn that he belonged to a Siennese family, and produced about

forty-five novels, two others being subsequently discovered by him, or at least one, divided into two in the MS. by the copyist, a very sufficient ground for an Italian controversy; and that they were, according to the usual practice, of a somewhat corrupt style and free character. The MS. was considered by Zeno as extremely valuable, being an only copy, and attributed by him to an earlier period than it deserved. Written upon parchment, its whole style and character seemed to authorise the supposition of its having originated two or three centuries before the critic's time, when in fact it has since been proved to belong to the latter part of the fifteenth, or to the beginning of the sixteenth century. To each of the Tales is prefixed the usual title, explaining its nature, written in red characters; and in addition to the stories, there is inserted a singular specimen of idiomatic phraseology, entitled, *Il Giuoco della Pugna*, a feigned letter to a friend, and a number of sonnets, canzoni, and ballate, amounting to thirty-four. We further learn from Signor Pellegrini, that an attempt was made to retouch, or rather to injure a portion of this beautiful MS. in the text, by altering the commencing letters *Tu*, so as to read *Voi*, which but too plainly appears, though happily this species of mutilation was not carried much further.—(*Lettera Dedicatoria.*)

GENTILE SERMINI.

NOVELLA III.

IN the province of Cabar, in Asia, there once flourished two noble and magnificent cities, situated within ten leagues of each other, called Soriana and Belfiore. Jealous of their respective power and influence, they merely observed an external shew of amity, and, though engaged in commercial intercourse, they never cordially united together. The people of Soriana being the most powerful of the two, frequently threatened the independence of those of Belfiore, and attempted by every means in their power to weaken and humiliate them. Well aware of their danger, the latter, rather than submit an inch of their dominions to the sovereignty of the Soriani, were prepared to throw themselves into the arms of the Christians or the Jews, and even to renounce the faith of their ancestors. Now, in the city of Belfiore, there was a noble youth of the name of Gallio, who happened to be deeply enamoured of a young girl, named Cardina, daughter of the great Marmoreo ;

who, strongly opposing the attachment of the young people, took measures to have the lover falsely accused, and declared a rebel to the state. Immediately after his banishment, Gallio set out for the city of Soriana, and there learning that Marmoreo himself had been the author of his disgrace, stung with a feeling of resentment, he adopted the most subtle plans of revenge (inveighing bitterly against the father), all of which he as suddenly abandoned, when he reflected upon the unaltered passion which he felt for the daughter.

At such times he would exclaim, " Oh wretched, wretched Gallio ! How dare I even imagine these means of revenge ? revenge, at the expense of my beloved Cardina. To injure her father is to injure her ; her, whom I must ever worship, and ever serve, though the daughter of my bitterest enemy. Oh distraction ! I am torn with contending duties ; I am injured and I burn for revenge ; I love, and yet I am about to offend the object of my idolatry. For, alas, I must do it, or remain for ever dishonoured ! Hath he not driven me forth, as a rebel and a traitor, from my native place ? Yet thou, my love, my Cardina, wert not here to blame ; for I fondly trust thou hast shed tears over my lot. When shall I behold thee, when return to Belfiore again ? Oh ye gods,

that I could cease to think, cease to exist, under the cruel thoughts that rack me! For revenge ought to call louder than my love, and yet I know I can do nothing to displease her. Fester thy base heart, Marmoreo, that could conceive the foul and vindictive purpose of rendering me the veriest wretch that loads earth's weary bosom, weary of such monsters as thee!"

Gallio having thus resolved to abandon all measures of vengeance, absence and hopelessness had soon the effect of weakening his love. In the course of a year or two, the image of Cardina ceased to haunt his fancy; but feelings of revenge and hatred, on the other hand, seemed to have usurped its place. She no longer continued to stand, like a good genius, between him and her father; and after revolving a thousand schemes of vengeance in his mind, he resolved, in order to deprive his enemy both of his authority and his life, to attempt the subjugation of his countrymen under the yoke of the Soriani. With this view he made himself acquainted with a party, whose secret object was to watch every opportunity of rendering themselves masters of Belfiore. The number appointed consisted of fifteen, and to these Gallio discovered his design of subjecting his native place, observing, at the same time, "I require of you

nothing further than the power of disposing, as I please, of the persons of Marmoreo and Cardina; the one for the sake of vengeance; the other, I trust, to be treated in a kinder way." To this the confederates gave their ready consent, and the conspiracy was matured before the beginning of the ensuing year; while a number of persons, amounting to sixty, of Sorian families which had long resided at Belfiore, united with them, in order better to betray the place. Among these, Saladino, who had the command of the Porta Marina, was the most powerful, his family having enjoyed many lucrative offices of high trust in Belfiore, during a period of nearly two hundred years. With him, Gallio and his party arranged the manner in which they were to be admitted through the said gate; and at the appointed hour the whole force of the Soriani was secretly marched by night into the province of Belfiore. Gallio, having been intensely engaged during many days previous, allowing himself little time for sleep, devoted a few moments to repose before setting out on his final exploit, and tried to compose himself to rest. In this state of suspense, the idea of Cardina naturally occurred to his mind; and the goddess of love attempting, from compassion, to counteract the influence of Mars and Saturn, that so greatly predo-

minated in him, presented her image in his slumbers, arrayed in more than her usual beauty, and with an expression of sorrow and tenderness in her countenance, while she seemed to say, that her everlasting love and gratitude should be the reward of his forbearance, if he would consent to abandon his cruel and sanguinary designs. So vivid was the impression upon his mind, that opening his arms as if to embrace her, he awoke, and found he had clasped only his sword, that lay at his side. With a feeling of rage and disappointment, he felt inclined to turn it against his own bosom, so strongly had his dream affected him, and altered his previous resolution of persevering in his enterprise. His love for Cardina, also, seemed to acquire renewed strength; and recollecting every word and action of the vision, his desire of vengeance, and all his bitter hatred against her father was forgotten, as he burst into a passionate flood of tears. Then the hopes of mutual passion which she appeared to hold out to him in his dreams, and the expression of her grief and trouble, all combined to turn the tide of his feelings into a more loyal and patriotic course. Suddenly, acting under the impulse of this change, he summoned his fellow conspirators, exiles, like himself, from Belfiore, to a secret meeting, and proceeded to address them in the following

words: "Fellow citizens and brothers! Can it be true that we are about to destroy the place that gave us birth, and to betray the city of our ancestors into the hands of her deadliest foes? Let us pause ere we produce irreparable evils, that may call down on us the execration of posterity, by turning our arms against our native land, that ought to be directed against its enemies. Alas! how shall we bear to see the Soriani lords of us and of our countrymen, ourselves the worst of vassals? for let us not flatter ourselves that we shall reap other than the traitor's reward. Honour and treachery are yet in our power to choose. Fellow citizens, which shall we embrace?" "Honour and our country!" exclaimed all with one voice. "Stay, hear me further," cried Gallio, taking advantage of the enthusiasm he had produced; "a messenger is just arrived, bringing me such tidings, that if you have heart to join me, we will return to our own city, but not without the glory of having first vanquished its enemies." Inspired with the fervour of his patriotism, the whole of his companions promised to follow him whithersoever he would lead. "Then," cried Gallio, "let one of you attend me;" and he selected the man he wished, "and let the rest await us here!" Having thus agreed upon the course they were to pursue, Gallio,

along with his companion, affected to proceed with the scheme as before, and under the pretence of an interview with Saladino, the governor of the Porta Marina, in order to fix upon the signals that were to be given for entering into the city of Belfiore, they proceeded forwards on horseback, until they reached Castel Fioralto, of which the governor, Parione, was one of the principal citizens, and strongly exasperated against the people of Soriana, on account of their having cruelly slain his father; and with him they took further counsel about their plans. On his inquiring into the cause of their arrival, Gallio replied, " We are come to inform you that it is in our power either to destroy or make our city twice as powerful as it is; and as we are quite aware of your wishes, we shall reveal every thing to you just as it occurred."

On hearing the particulars, Parione expressed his entire concurrence, and united in their plans with the utmost joy. Having matured these, and sworn fidelity to each other, Parione, speedily mounting horse, took his leave, and arrived before sunset at Belfiore, where presenting himself before Patrioni, master of the palace where the seignory held their sittings, he desired him to call a secret meeting of a hundred of the chief citizens of the place. This done, and the subject

being proposed, it met with the general approbation of the whole assembly ; and instantly closing all the gates, and doubling the guards, they gave orders for the arrest of Saladino, and the sixty conspirators ready prepared for the undertaking. Upon being subjected to the question, and confronted with Gallio, they made confession, and were placed in strict confinement. The whole city, in the mean time, was put under arms and prepared for the reception of the force of the Soriani, led on by Gallio. About two hours before day-light, the tramp of horse was heard approaching ; and Saladino was compelled to open the gate, as had been agreed upon, at the appointed signals, betraying his party to destruction, on condition that his own and his children's lives should be spared ; the whole of his family, in case of his failure, being involved in one common ruin. When the time approached, therefore, though desirous of saving his own party, he opened the gates by command of Gallio, and the hostile force, led on by the chief citizens of Soriana, rushed forward into the city. Many of the leaders were richly armed and caparisoned, vying with each other in the splendor of their appearance, and shining with gold and precious gems, ornaments in which their country abounded. Add to these, the great variety of burnished shields, lances,

bows, and quivers, with dark plumes nodding in the air, and the flash of arms glittering through the moon-light. Thus proudly decorated, are the Soriani accustomed to march forth to meet their enemies in the open field, the chief lords and gentlemen eagerly pressing forward in the van, leaving the least considerable of the citizens to bring up the rear. Marshalled accordingly in their best array, the Soriani now arrived at the Porta Marina, where, received by Saladino, they believed themselves upon the point of becoming masters of the city. By the advice of Gallio, they immediately marched forward, and took possession of the cloister of Diana's temple, to the number of six thousand men, while three thousand were held in reserve in the temple of Mercury. Before day-break, however, just as they imagined they were on the point of striking a decisive blow, they were startled by the loud clash of arms above them, and looking up, beheld crowds of armed men lining the walls of the great cloister of Diana, the chiefs of whom addressed the astonished Soriani with the cry of: "Yield, traitors, yield; or death to our prisoners!" at the same time showering down loads of burning combustibles upon their heads, so as to convince them they had not the least chance of escape. After some threats of rage and

despair, the Soriani, finding every means of opposition useless, were induced to surrender, and threw down their arms. The whole of their rich equipage, and all their golden ornaments, became the spoil of their adversaries, while they were themselves led away in ranks of ten, to be consigned to the gloomy dungeons of Sabar. Their great commander Rabooth, who guarded the temple of Mercury with his three thousand soldiers, shortly afterwards met with the same fate, appealing only to the mercy of his victorious enemy. By the intercession of Gallio, he was pardoned on the following conditions: that he should make oath never again to enter into the city of Soriana, or attempt any thing against his victorious enemy. After making a solemn engagement to this effect, he was allowed to go free, and directly took his departure from the city; establishing his residence, with his companions, at Sarbonia, one hundred leagues from Soriana. The Belfioresi, then returning in triumphal procession to the grand cloister of Diana, collected the spoils of their adversaries, and carried them afterwards to their palace-master, who appropriated them to the benefit of the community. They next proceeded to witness the execution of the treacherous friends of Saladino, who had entered into terms with Gallio to betray

their country, and who now were led forth into the large square to the number of sixty-five, all of whom were quartered alive. Over the heads of the traitor and his sons, whose lives were spared, was written in large letters, the result of the invasion, in the following manner: "We, the people of Belfiore, have revenged ourselves upon our enemies, by turning their arms against themselves; let the traitor Saladino bear witness to this. We send him and his children to you, with his companions, all of whom may be known by the tickets appended to their necks; the rest of the soldiers, for good reasons, we, the people of Belfiore, think proper to retain. Moreover, we decree, that in future, no native of Soriana shall become resident in our city, or dare to assume the name of a Belfiorese, that he may no longer enjoy the advantage of betraying us, and of turning our hospitality into our ruin."

Along with this fatal proclamation were sent four cart-loads, filled with the dead bodies of their enemies, which reached about night-fall, the gates of Soriana, whose inhabitants were expecting the arrival of their countrymen with a very different escort. Upon the return of the party to Belfiore, a grand tournament, with festivals of every kind, was proclaimed for the people, to be continued during a series of

many weeks. Gallio, who had now greatly distinguished himself in the eyes of the Belfioresi, ordered a great feast in honour of the victory, and proceeded with a numerous party to wait upon Patrioni, grand-master of the palace, requesting an assemblage of the chief citizens, to which Marmoreo, and his daughter Cardina, should be invited. When met together, Gallio entered with a train of friends and nobles, and harangued them in the following words : “ My honoured fathers, senators, and chiefs of bands ! when I contemplate the singular degree of prudence, fortitude, temperance, and valour, with which you have hitherto conducted your affairs, I bow to the decree that rendered me an unhappy exile from my native land. Nor am I here come to question the justice of the proceeding instituted against me by your learned and distinguished citizen Marmoreo, though I still remain in ignorance of his motives. Rather would I accuse myself, in having been so unfortunate as to draw down upon myself the weight of your displeasure ; for which I do here humbly entreat your forgiveness, more especially in consideration of my tender age ; not presuming to make other defence, or set up any better excuse. And so far am I sensible of your high wisdom and authority ; and of my own slight deserts, that I am here ready to deliver myself

up to your judgment once more, as a traitor to my country, and the author of the hateful and sacrilegious plot just attempted by your enemies. True, it was I, and I alone, who brought the whole secret power of Soriana into the bosom of your homes, who induced Saladino, with his fellow-traitors, on whom you had conferred your offices of trust and honour, to league with your foes in this nefarious design, and open to us your gates, that we might bring you under the yoke of Soriana, from which you are now fortunately for ever free. And let me caution you, before I yield my forfeit life, never in future to commit offices of trust, or the command of gates, to the Soriani, or to any other foreigners upon the face of the earth. It is enough to grant them passports through your dominions; but to make them governors over gates and citadels is the height of infatuation, for the love of country never becomes entirely obliterated from the human breast. Now, as the unhappy cause of the great evil that had so nearly befallen the state, I surrender my person into your hands, entreating only, with my dying prayers, that the glory and triumph of our last noble enterprize may be wholly attributed to the youthful and beautiful Cardina, whose many virtues have produced, by their influence over my soul, the present happy

result. It was she who snatched the patricidal sword out of my hand, who, when I was bent on the irretrievable destruction of her father and her friends, stood between us, like a guardian angel of peace ; and with her tender and sorrowful aspect, her passionate tears, and sweet appeals to my love and honour, restored me to higher and better thoughts, pointing out to me the path of patriotic duty that I have since pursued. If, then, death be due to me as a traitor, to her let triumphal arches, and honours befitting a queen, be afforded, let her praises be sung over my obsequies, let her be called the saviour of Belfiore, and scothe my wounded spirit ere it take its final flight !” Here Gallio became silent, and kneeling in the midst of the council, he raised his hands, as if in prayer, while his eyes were bent upon the ground, and awaited in this attitude his sentence. The chiefs and elders of the city, imagining that Gallio would have closed his harangue by soliciting honours and rewards for his great services, having risen by his last exploit high in the estimation of all ranks, were surprised at such proofs of unfeigned humility and contrition, and began to consider him in a still nobler point of view than before: mingled tears, congratulations, and applause, followed the conclusion of his address. But the emotions of Cardina and her

father, the author of all Gallio's sufferings, far surpassed those of any others present : the lady's tears flowed passionately and uncontrolled ; her sobs drowned her voice when she attempted to intercede for him ; while the more silent, but deep and painful struggles of her father, torn as he was by the sense of ingratitude and remorse, produced a sensation of awe and trouble throughout the assembly. It was evident that the lovers had long been attached to each other ; that he must have opposed their union by the most cruel and unjustifiable measures, and a feeling of compassion for both soon communicated itself to the people, who rushing forward with wild and tumultuous cries, demanded the head of Marmoreo, and declared Gallio their liege lord and prince. The chiefs and elders, yielding to the popular commotion, rose from their seats, and deputing one of their members to bear the ensigns of authority, they placed the gold staff in the hands of their new master. After a due degree of modest refusal and deference to the superior claims of the aged senators, Gallio was induced to accept the government of the state, and, mounting the sovereign tribunal, in an harangue to the people, expressed his gratitude for the high trust reposed in him. The people, then becoming acquainted with his attachment to the lady Cardina, unanimously insisted

upon her taking her place, as his bride elect, at his side ; the sole condition upon which they consented to spare the life of the treacherous and cruel Marmoreo. The nuptials were accordingly soon after solemnized in the most splendid manner, followed by every variety of games and jousts, and such exhibitions as were best adapted to gratify the taste of the people. Wherever Gallio made his appearance, he was welcomed with the most enthusiastic shouts of applause, as the beloved sovereign of his people ; and he long continued lord of Belfiore, blest in the affections of the wise and beautiful Cardina, and esteemed for his equal administration of the laws. The season of these joyous festivals being over, it was resolved in council that the dungeons of Sabar should be blocked up on all sides, with the six thousand Sorian soldiers enclosed within ; all of whom thus miserably perished. A herald was next despatched to summon the city of Soriana, which was soon compelled to send in its submission to Gallio, and was annexed to his dominions.

NOVELLA VIII.

IN the province of Soria there once flourished two rival chiefs, one of whom was named Alvigi, Count of Monforte, the other the Marquess Sivero, lord of a rich city called Belvaso, whose domains were situated within two days' march of each other. Having long tried their respective skill and valour, with various fortune, against each other, Alvigi at length took up a position close to Belvaso, which he frequently attacked with fury. The marquess, on his part, made several desperate assaults upon his enemy's camp, which he found, however, so strongly entrenched, that one day, after a severe action, his troops were put to flight, and he himself slain upon the field. On the ensuing day his castle and dominions fell into the hands of the conqueror, who, believing he had taken ample revenge for past injuries, and using his victory with moderation, received the inhabitants of Belvaso into the rank of his faithful subjects, declaring that all cause of enmity had ceased with the death of the marquess, and that his sole wish was to render them happy under their new government. Grateful for this kind treatment, the Belvasesi submitted quietly to his

sway, and he admitted them to the same privileges as were enjoyed by the subjects of his own state. A season of peace and prosperity followed, interrupted only by occasional feuds between the chief citizens, the most serious of which arose out of the jealousy of two, named Macidonio and Cherubino. The former was at the head of one of the richest families in Belvaso, extremely proud, and envious of the authority of his compeers, while Cherubino was a man held in high esteem for his valor and fidelity, and possessed of considerable reputation and influence. Exasperated at the superior confidence reposed in him, Macidonio resolved to make use of every art to banish him from the capital, being fully bent upon ruining him, or perishing in the attempt. For this purpose he began gradually to infuse suspicions of his fidelity into the count's mind, availing himself of the arts of one of his kinsmen named Savojetto, originally from Belvaso, though his family had become naturalized in Monforte. He it was, who, possessing the private ear of Count Alvigi, consented to ruin Cherubino in his master's favour, by insinuating that he had been dissatisfied with his government ever since the loss of his late master the Marquess Sivero, whose device he even yet carried; and as he was known to possess great influence and courage, he

might render himself extremely formidable in case of any popular commotion. In this way he continued to insinuate doubts of the noble Cherubino into the mind of the count, until the latter, alarmed and incensed at what he heard, despatched a messenger for him. Aware of the plot that had been concerted between Macidonio and Savojetto, and certain of encountering the anger of his lord, he nevertheless determined to obey, conscious of his perfect innocence, and despising the intrigues of his enemies. These last, dreading lest he should be able to answer their calumnies, and retort the charges upon themselves, anxiously spread abroad reports, that the count, in great indignation, had resolved to sacrifice him to the offended laws of his country. So far, however, from deterring him from appearing, these rumours added to his desire of meeting his calumniators, and summoning his four sons to attend him, they speedily mounted horse, and arrived the next day at Monforte. They rode directly to the palace, and requested the master to obtain an interview for them as soon as possible. Without waiting, therefore, to refresh themselves, they attended the summons to council, where Cherubino, kneeling with his sons before the count, with much humility and reverence, requested to know his commands.

“ Ah,” cried the count in a tone of surprise, “ is it indeed Cherubino, the last man whom I should have expected to behold here ? Still, you are welcome ; but you look fatigued with your long ride. And your fine boys here too ! This is passing strange ; but take a little repose ; you shall hear further from us to-morrow.” To this, Cherubino, in the most open yet respectful manner, replied, “ Speak not, my noble lord, of weariness in your service ; shew in what way I can promote your honour or your authority, and I will not be found the last in the race of duty or valorous achievement. I only now crave, that here, in your illustrious council, before the judge from whom I ought to expect my sentence, I may plead in my own defence ; for I am too well aware that reports have been industriously circulated highly injurious to my character, and that the authors of them, whom I know, in order to intimidate me, and render me still more guilty in your eyes, threatened me with death if I dared to appear in your presence. But this has brought me only the sooner to your feet ; let them attempt to disgrace me as they will, I have served you faithfully, and I will hear my sentence from your own lips, as I was accustomed to appeal face to face against my enemies before my late lord and master. It is said, indeed, that because I served him faith-

fully, I must prove a traitor to you, and there are those here who wish to persuade you of it, out of secret malice and revenge. True it is that the Marquess Sivero always found loyal followers both in my father and myself, for we never served other master, and he never abused his authority, so as to give us any cause of just complaint. To him we owe the fortunes of our house, he honoured and promoted me, entrusted me with his secret councils, and I can do no less than respect his memory, as I should not otherwise be worthy of receiving a benefit from any future master, but rather of his severest reprehension, suspicion, and contempt. And as it has at length pleased heaven to render you, by rightful conquest, the lord and master to whom I owe allegiance, since the death of my late honoured chief; so I shall never be found wanting in devotion and fidelity to your service: and the more that, tracing my origin to Monforte, and from the House of Liona, I may now consider myself restored to my native land." And having clearly proved to the count's satisfaction that such was the real truth, the latter began to regard both him and his sons with a more auspicious aspect, and, acknowledging the frankness with which he spoke, he turned to his accusers, and, in particular, to Savojetto, who had already frequently attempted to interrupt the ac-

cused ; and who now addressing the count, maintained that it would be a sufficient answer, to point to the device of the Marquess Sivero, which was still borne by the treacherous Cherubino ; a sufficient proof of his sentiments. But Cherubino, here feigning entire ignorance of the person of Savojetto, who had been bribed to make these charges, with an air of indifference inquired his name, and receiving an answer from Savojetto, he continued, “ Why, sir, it is one thing to carry the device of our leader upon our arms, and another to bear it stamped upon our hearts. Now tell me, Savojetto, whether do you think it a fouler wrong, to betray a master who has heaped riches and honours upon you, or, like me, who bear equal rank with the marquess, to prove faithful and loyal to him while he lived ?” To this his calumniator replied, “ You are very bold, thus to defend the character of that arch-traitor, Sivero ; but I should consider myself as a still more detestable villain, were I capable of harbouring a thought against the honour or dignity of my liege lord, Alvigi, whose presence you thus outrage with your indecent praises of his bitterest foe.” “ We war not with the dead,” was the reply of Cherubino, as he turned from him, with an air of contempt, towards the lord Alvigi, adding, with the same open and unembarrassed mien, “ As you

have justly given me free licence to defend myself, I shall now avail myself of it, as my calumniator has thus challenged me to the trial, to prove that, of the two, I am the most loyal subject, and that Savojetto is only a creature in the hands of Macidonio, bribed to rob me of my honour, if not of my life." The count, with one of his most angry frowns, here interrupting him, exclaimed, "How say you, Cherubino? Take heed of your safety, and prove your words good, or your head is not long your own." "Cast it, then, at the feet of my enemies," replied Cherubino, "if I fix not the name of traitor upon my accuser. This Savojetto possesses your confidence; I know he is originally from Belvaso, of the family of Sanguigni, and related to his friend Macidonio. During the late war he was one of your council, the whole of whose deliberations he communicated to Macidonio, by which we were long enabled to counteract all your plans, your open attacks and secret ambushes, in such a manner as frequently to give us the advantage. Let him attempt to deny this as he will, I have here a letter signed by his own hand, informing our party, ten days before, of your intention to burn the city-gate in your attack upon the first day of April, while, at the same time, you would attempt to carry the place by assault, employing moreover a hundred mi-

ners for the purpose of blowing up our citadel. This precious document falling, as chance would have it, into my hands, I have kept it secret, in order to spare the author until the present time. Still, you may recollect of what essential service it was to us, for when you assaulted our gates, you found them converted into iron, and so stoutly defended, that you were that morning compelled to retreat with loss. You met with the same kind of reception from us, and owing to the same cause, at the fort; insomuch that we might consider the traitor Savojetto as the author of many of our victories, and of your reverses." At the same time he handed the proofs of his treason to the count, adding, that it was now become his duty to acquaint him, as his liege lord, with every secret of state. The same motives that led him to observe the utmost fidelity to his former master, now actuated him in regard to the honour and safety of Alvigi; having been restored to his native place, and received into the service of a valiant and gracious prince. Here Cherubino ceased, and the dark frown was observed to gather on the brow of Count Alvigi. Savojetto attempted in vain to defend himself; he ventured not to encounter the eye of his master, and his confusion and detection being but too evident, he was ordered into custody, while the count sent a

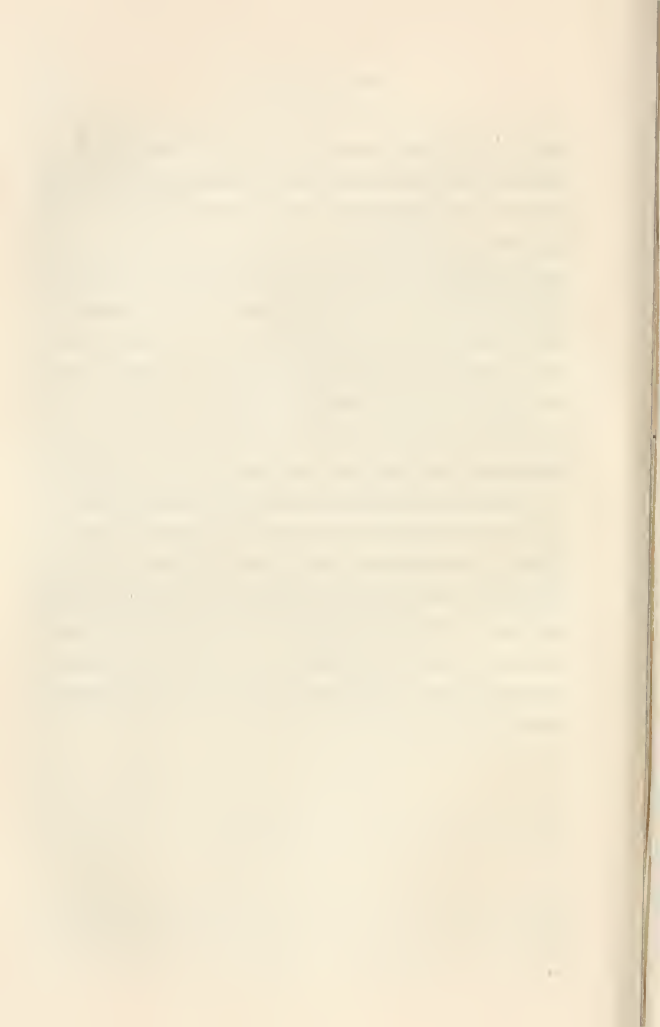
fresh summons for Macidonio. On his arrival, he thus addressed him: "I wish not to reproach you, Macidonio, for your fidelity to your late lord and master; on the contrary, I greatly applaud you for your exertions in his favour. Therefore I forgave all the past injuries I had suffered at your hands: I gave your city the same privileges and advantages as were enjoyed by my own subjects; and you have yourself no reason to consider me in the light of a conqueror, or of a harsh master. Why, then, have you conspired against an innocent man? Why attempted, by the foulest arts, to ruin the noble Cherubino in my favour? Since you found your hands and your tongue such ready instruments of offence against your noble countryman, since you attempted with them to deprive him of his life and honour, let them suffer the penalty due to such a crime."

The count then sentenced him to lose his hands and tongue, by the public executioner, as a lasting proof of perfidy and ingratitude, in bearing false witness and suborning others, against the honour of his compeer, his fellow countryman, and his neighbour. Turning next towards his colleague Savojetto, he continued: "As for thee, thou basest and most perfidious of villains, thou whom I have loaded with riches and honours, and called by the familiar

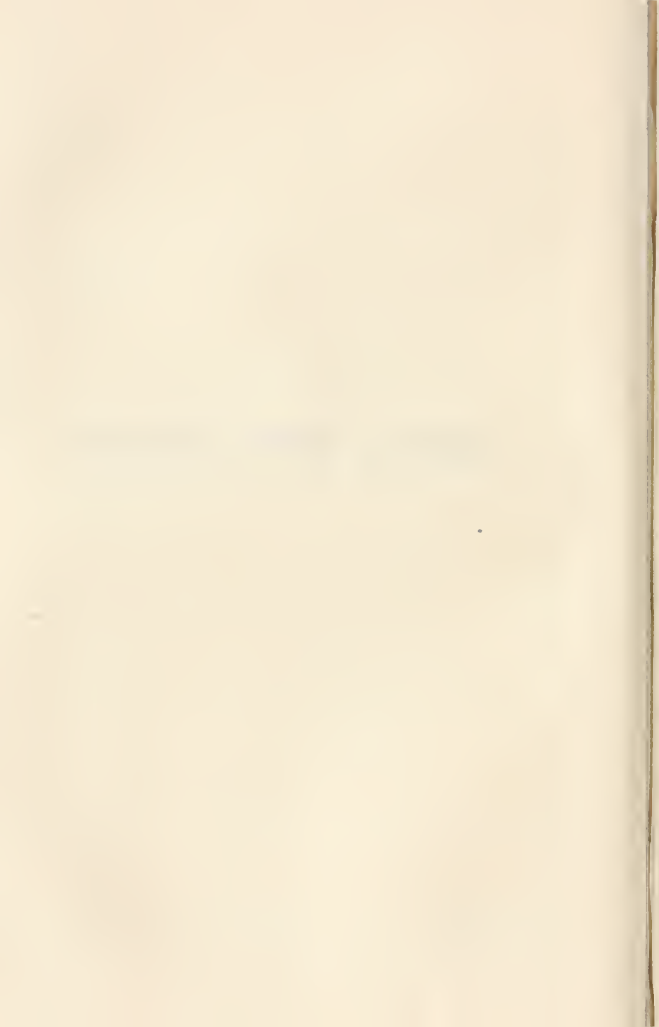
names of counsellor, companion, and friend, while thou hast repeatedly perjured thy soul with a thousand false oaths of loyalty and truth ; tell me what species of death, what thousand tortures are enough to expiate thy black ingratitude ? The justice upon thy head, however inadequate, shall at least be retributive :” and forthwith the count summoned together all the surviving relatives of those whom the arch traitor had basely betrayed to death, in the attacks upon the gate and citadel of Belvaso. Seizing upon the body of Savojetto with the insatiate thirst of revenge, they bound him alive to a column, and made him a mark to shoot at for their amusement. They next proceeded to hang, to draw, and quarter him, dividing his limbs between the different gates of Monforte, while they placed his head upon the walls of the great palace, on the sides of which were ordered to be erected two marble pillars. On one of these was engraved the number of honours and benefits lavished upon the traitor Savojetto, while the other was painted red to denote his family name of Sanguigna, tracing its origin to Belvaso, and on this was written the amount of all the treason and ingratitude received from him in return by the noble count, with the loss attending it. In the middle of the chain, suspended between the

two columns, was seen the head of the culprit, fixed in such a way that no one could either reach or remove it; and the columns were so situated, that none of the members belonging to the count's council could pass and repass to their hall, without being reminded of their duty by going under them. The possessions of Savojetto were next distributed among the persons who had revenged their slaughtered relatives upon the body of their cruel enemy; and shortly afterwards fourteen of his fellow traitors and conspirators were discovered and executed in the city of Monforte.

When this impressive tragedy was concluded, the count, turning towards the noble Cherubino, with a joyous countenance, said: "Now, my good and faithful servant, the fruits of thy worth and fidelity are seen. Having happily rid my dominions of traitors, do thou, my friend, receive all the honours and privileges which they enjoyed, and take thy seat at my right hand."



Novels of Agnolo Firenzuola.



AGNOLO FIRENZUOLA.

THE name of this author is better known, and far more celebrated throughout Italy, than that of most of his contemporaries, who particularly devoted themselves to one branch of composition. For he is no less distinguished in his character of a novelist than as a critic and a poet; and he is entitled to rank amongst the first classical scholars. His talents have been highly commended by Tiraboschi, Crescimbeni, and indeed all the critical historians, from the period in which he flourished; while his life was twice written, once by Father Mieron, and again, in a much superior manner, by the learned Manni. He was born at Florence, on the 28th of September, 1493, and pursued his studies in the cities of Perugia and Sienna; where his acquaintance, however, with the Aretini was neither favourable to the proper direction of his genius, nor to the correctness of his manners. In their letters we are presented with a lively and amusing, though by no means always an edifying account, of the manner in which they passed their time: their satirical and

burlesque attacks upon each other, and humorous pieces of poetry, with abundant ridicule heaped upon their adversaries, happily contrasted with their mutual praises and exquisite conceit of themselves. Firenzuola is nevertheless said, with such qualifications, to have assumed the ecclesiastical habit, and to have become, according to Tiraboschi, *Monaco Vallombrosano*, belonging to the monastery of Santa Maria di Spoleti, in which order he attained to very considerable honours. After suffering from long illness, of which he complains bitterly in one of his letters to his friend Aretino, he died about the age of fifty, towards the middle of the sixteenth century. The entire edition of his works appeared at Florence, in 1763, containing his prose productions, novels, strictures upon the letters of Trissino, treatises upon animals, two comedies, a translation of Apuleius's Golden Ass, applied to the circumstances of his own times, with a variety of other matter. These are distinguished as much for the ease and polish of their style, as for the liveliness and diversity of their subjects, a circumstance that contributed not a little to their celebrity.

AGNOLO FIRENZUOLA.

NOVELLA I.

IN ancient days, it is said, there flourished in Tuscany two noble citizens, both extremely wealthy, and both descended from good families. Not satisfied, however, like too many, with the reputation acquired by their ancestors, nor esteeming the works of others as any kind of ornament to themselves, they vied with each other in conferring distinction upon their nobility by their actions, rather than in assuming it from the dignity of their birth. Thus, in their correspondence, their manners, and the whole tenor of their life and transactions, they procured for themselves a high reputation throughout Florence, which was not a little enhanced by the mutual esteem, and more than fraternal kindness that was invariably observed to exist between them. They were generally seen in company together, their pursuits were nearly congenial, and their days appeared to flow, at once in so noble and so pure a stream, that fortune herself seemed to respect their virtues and their happiness.

Her smiles, however, as of old, were delusive; for Niccolo degli Albizi, one of these two friends, hearing of the decease of an uncle, his mother's brother, who died extremely rich in Valencia, leaving Niccolo, in default of children, his sole heir, was under the necessity of making a voyage into Spain. Mentioning his intention to his friend Coppo, the latter directly proposed, as he expected, to accompany him. Having made their arrangements, therefore, they were just upon the point of departure, when, unfortunately, Coppo's father was seized with a mortal distemper, which terminated his existence in a few days; a circumstance that left Niccolo no alternative but that of giving up his voyage, or proceeding alone.

Adopting the latter resolution, after taking a sorrowful and affectionate leave, he bent his course towards Genoa, and there took his passage in a Genoese vessel, upon the point of sailing for a Spanish port. It was now that his fortune first began to wear a different aspect; for the ship had hardly made fifty leagues from shore, when about sunset the sea was observed to become white and foamy, presenting at the same time various other signs of an approaching tempest. And before the master of the vessel had completed his orders, she was enveloped in a torrent of rain, while the fierce hurricane ren-

dered her unmanageable, bearing her onwards in a shroud of mist and darkness, that defied the eye of the oldest navigator. This soon became, if possible, more horridly appalling by contrast with the lurid flashes of lightning that broke athwart the gloom, consigning them again to utter darkness. Images of the most terrific nature haunted the fancy of the crew, thus suddenly deprived of all external objects ; and it was piteous to think of the efforts of those who retained heart enough to struggle with the adverse elements, while they often adopted, in hope of rescue, measures that tended, perhaps, only to accelerate their own destruction. Even the stentorian voice of the master could no longer be heard through the storm, while the straining and rending of the masts and sails, intermingled with occasional cries, and the deep volleys of thunder rolling in the distance, formed altogether an union of appalling sounds that struck terror to the boldest spirit.

The danger still increased, and their remaining courage, dying away in their last feeble efforts, soon wholly forsook them ; for they were now borne mountains high, now plunged, as it were, into the abysses of the deep, from which the ship would again emerge, to the surprise of all, like a sea bird from the hollow caverns of the deep. So terrific indeed, before she

yielded, did the scene appear, that the hair of the boldest sailor stood on end, as he felt, rather than saw, the furious commingling, the utter confusion, and the wild reverberation, of heaven, air, and sea. Alas! how hastily did the most niggardly and grasping hands consign their treasure, their richest silks and stuffs, to the remorseless deep, with all the precious metals that were first thrown overboard; though, when lightened of her load, she only seemed to drive more madly before the winds. The affrighted passengers, who had before sought to shun the sight of their approaching doom below, at length rushed tumultuously upon deck. "The cabin is filling with water," was the cry, while every sailor, who before had stood to his post, then fell on his knees, and embracing his nearest friend, and joining in the general cry of *Misericordia!* appeared to consign himself to his doom. How many who wanted comfort themselves, generously tried in that bitter moment to support others, yet weaker and more appalled! How many who had seldom or never prayed, were heard muttering faint and incoherent appeals to heaven! Some called upon the blessed Virgin, some upon San Niccolò di Bari, while others trusted to San Ermo; and pilgrimages to the Holy Sepulchre, and religious vows, were abundantly poured forth, in the hope

of being miraculously rescued, like Jonas, from the bowels of the deep. The libertine was even heard to make a vow of marriage; dealers and usurers swore to make restitution; while such few as loved the world less, uttered the most tender expressions to their absent fathers, mothers, children, and friends, at the same time mingling their pity for each other. While thus employed, the main-mast, with a terrific crash, went into the sea, which was the signal for the vessel's parting, hardly affording time for a few of the most bold and active to seize the scattered pieces of the wreck. Niccolo, however, being among these last, supported himself with the aid of a small table, nor ever yielded his hold until he found himself thrown upon the coast of Barbary, a short way from Susa. Being there perceived by a party of fishermen, they took compassion upon him, and conducted him to a small hut belonging to them, where they restored him to animation over a large fire. Upon finding that he spoke in the Latin tongue, the fishermen, supposing him to be an infidel, and that they were not likely to catch any more valuable fish that morning, agreed to carry him instantly for sale to Tunis. There they sold him to a wealthy merchant of the name of Lagi Amet, who, liking his youthful and gentlemanlike appearance, resolved to retain him about his own per-

son. In this service the captive displayed so much discretion and fidelity, as to merit the regard of the whole household, but most unfortunately for his master, of one in particular; the lovely wife of Amet having been unable to behold the pleasing and handsome stranger with indifference. Possessed of the greatest beauty and accomplishments, she remarked the superiority of his manners and appearance to every other person around her; and at first taking an innocent delight in hearing the narration of his life and travels, she soon began to feel uneasy when out of his company. She would sit and hear him converse, and gaze upon him for hours, and yet so open and undisguised was her admiration, that Lagi Amet, entertaining no idea of the possibility of danger, made his beautiful lady a present of the amusing slave upon whom she bestowed so much attention. Overpowered with agitation and delight, she attempted to conceal the pleasure which such an offer gave her, and for some time succeeded in it; though she now began to be aware, when too late, of the real nature of her feelings. In spite of her caution, she was often on the point of betraying them to the object of her regard, but the idea of the confidence reposed in her by Amet, and of bestowing her affections upon a slave, deprived her of the power of utterance. Be-

sides the difficulties she would have to encounter, her life, her honour, every thing which she valued, would be at stake; and frequent and long were the struggles she made against the growing passion that consumed her. "Wretched creature that I am!" she would exclaim, "to be so deeply sensible of those superior merits and accomplishments that I must not love, nor hardly admire, and yet all these affections are bestowed upon a slave, an outcast, and a Christian; one who, upon the first glimpse of liberty, would leave thee to weep over thine own weakness in sorrow and despair. And how could he love me, indeed? Could a slave love me as he loves his own liberty? Oh, abandon the very thought; it is alike treason against my honour and my life! If I sacrifice myself, let it at least be for some nobler object; let it not be said that the wife of Amet died for a slave! But, alas! why did I not feel and act in this way before; before I became thus tortured, lost, abandoned to passion and despair! Besides, am I not wed? am I not already the property of another? Yes, it is madness to pursue the path I am in, and still I feel, I know, I have not strength to abandon it. If I yield not; if I tell him not all my love and sufferings to-day; should I continue still to see and to listen to him, I only prolong the period of my ruin until to-morrow.

Let me hasten then, and acquaint him while there is yet time ; for though a foreigner and a slave, he has a noble spirit, and it is fortune only that is to blame. She cannot rob him of those sweet and courteous manners, of that true nobility of soul that shines in every tone and look, and of all those virtues which seem to surround him with a radiant light that attracts my very soul, and which I feel sure he must possess beyond all the men I have ever seen. Can fortune deprive him of these, and of his noble birth ? No, to be unfortunate is the common lot of all ; and even were I the next moment to become a slave, should I not still be the same I now am ? His ill fortune, therefore, ought not to make me love him the less ; and who can say I may not be the happy means of bringing him over to the true faith, while at the same time he will on that account become more passionately attached to me ? And why should a weak and wretched creature like myself, attempt to master a feeling that has enslaved thousands of the wisest men upon earth ? I must at least just see and speak to him, though I refrain from giving him the most distant idea of my love !”

With these weak and dangerous sentiments, the unhappy lady, half reconciled to her fate, sought the presence of her handsome slave ; nor was it long

before this was followed by an explanation, that, almost inarticulate between tears and blushes, invested Niccolo rather with the character of her lord than of her slave. Still, he was long in doubt, whether he ought to credit the words he heard ; whether it were reality, or a dream ; a snare laid for his honour, or the proudest tribute that could be rendered to his worth. At first then, he was about to check the torrent of her feelings, expressing equal surprise and alarm at what he heard ; but when he next reflected upon the many gentle tokens of her kindness and attention to him, and upon her superior sense and accomplishments beyond all the women he had ever seen ; bethinking himself at the same time, of the story of the Conte d'Anversa and the Queen of France, besides many others ; he began to consider the whole as nothing less than actual truth.

Warmly expressing his deep gratitude for the distinction conferred upon him, and far from being insensible to her transcendent beauty and accomplishments, the enslaved Niccolo bent himself lowly at his fair mistress's feet. Yet possessing high and honourable principles, he resolved to make her his upon no other condition than consenting to be baptized in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. The lady, who had every inclination to become a believer on

these terms, finding that she had no chance of adding him to the disciples of Mahomet, readily gave her consent, sealing it at the same time with a thousand Saracenic oaths : upon which Niccolo thought it incumbent upon him to explain a little more clearly the nature of the Christian religion, and what it imposed upon her. Thinking the conditions at first a little hard, she made some slight demur ; proposing that they should rather both embrace the doctrines of Mahomet, which were certainly more easy, and much more likely to be fulfilled. Niccolo, however, assured her, that as a Christian she was bound to observe as many duties as possible, and to pray for grace to perform such as she felt an inclination to omit ; that she must never be weary of her task ; that she must be found always watching, and not like the foolish virgins, who forgot to trim their lamps, and whose lights went out. On hearing him utter these words, she would certainly have pronounced him mad, had she not already been too deeply in love. As it was, she contented herself with saying, after revolving a variety of confused ideas in her mind : “ Come, you shall make me what you please ;” and accordingly she was the same day baptized, christened, confessed, received the communion, and married to Niccolo according to the rites of

the holy church. And so sweet in a short time did its new mysteries and duties appear to her, that being naturally possessed of superior intellect and endowments, she no longer regretted the faith of her ancestors, and began to take delight in nothing so much as having the Christian doctrines expounded to her by the voice of Niccolo.

While she thus continued making daily progress, under the judicious instructions of Niccolo, in a subject so important to her best interests, Niccolo's friend Coppo, in the mean while, had not been idle, inquiring in all directions, wherever he conceived it probable that he might have been wrecked or captured. Not content with this, he himself set out in quest of him, and arrived at Tunis just as Niccolo happened to be passing with the lady close by the place where he was seen dismounting, so that they met and recognized each other in the streets. Niccolo testified his gratitude to Coppo for so striking a proof of his fidelity, but at the same time requested him not to execute his intention of procuring his ransom, until he should hear further from him; and then giving him his address, and shaking him cordially by the hand, he accompanied his lady home. A little surprised at this occurrence, the lady inquired with a smile, who he was, and what business he could

have with her slave, being particularly jealous of every thing that might interfere with her own views; questions which her Christian husband answered, with his usual eloquence, to her entire satisfaction. Yet, as we may easily believe, Niccolo was still anxious to return to his native land; but he was aware, that if the enamoured lady discovered his design, she would effect his utter destruction, or at least would counteract his plans. He was therefore uncertain how to act; and for this reason he had exhorted Coppo to secrecy, as to the object of his arrival. Besides, he would have preferred, rather than basely desert her, to remain in the pleasing slavery to which his adored lady had consigned him. Fly, however, somewhere, they shortly must; as she had now become so extravagantly attached to him, that he was fearful of the affair reaching the ears of Lagi Amet. With this view, he now determined to persuade her to accompany him, insisting that it was one of the duties of a Christian wife to share her husband's fortunes, and follow him wherever he went. He therefore considered the arrival of Coppo as a very fortunate circumstance, and after consulting with him, and reflecting upon the best method that could be adopted, they determined to carry her along with them. So

Niccolo represented to his wife that there was no time to be lost, if they wished to avoid the fate of so many unfortunate lovers, who had fallen victims to the bow-string or the sack ; and to this judicious opinion the lady, without any sort of hesitation, subscribed. “ Yes,” she added, “ I will see your beautiful Italy ; there is no question of it at all ; whatever sacrifices I make, whatever pleasures and honours I relinquish, they are for your sake, and I shall not regret them. And yet I tremble when I think upon the dreadful risks I am about to encounter, even if I escape alive out of the hands of the savage infidel who called me his consort, whom it would perhaps be the wisest way to strangle before we go.” Here Niccolo, grieved that she should have made so little progress in the duty of Christian charity, reminded her that she must no longer consider these things in the light she had been used to, adding, that he felt inclined rather to pity the fate of Amet, in being deprived of so much beauty and perfection, were it not that it was his paramount duty to convert infidels to the true faith. Then, advising her to collect the whole of her treasures, but to respect the property of Amet, he hastened to fix the time and method of his departure with his friend Coppo.

All at length being in readiness, they planned a

little pleasure party, feigning it was entirely for the amusement of Amet, to which the foolish infidel, not a little proud of so delicate a compliment, gladly consented. Having conveyed every thing on board a fast-sailing little pinnace, they said that they would just pay a visit to one of the Dey's large ships before they called for their master ; and, hoisting all sail, they very wisely left the old merchant behind them. They had proceeded about half a league from shore, when some of Lagi Amet's servants, observing them pass the vessel at full sail, and boldly hold on their course, raised a hue and cry that very quickly reached the ears of their master. Tearing his hair, at least what little was left of it, the credulous old infidel, in a fit of rage and despair, despatched boats in pursuit, without number, employing himself in the mean time with trying different bow-strings, and other refined instruments of torture, to welcome their return. And unluckily, as it happened, though they escaped pursuit, and set foot in safety on the Sicilian shore, they took up their quarters at an hotel in Messina, where the following unpleasant circumstances occurred. For the ambassador of the king of Tunis, having that very day arrived at the same place, to transact affairs of great importance at the court of Sicily, occupied apartments in the same

house; and, casting his eyes upon the disordered dress and dark complexion of the lady, he thought that he recognized in the fugitive, one whom he had often seen at Tunis. At the same moment arrived letters, advertising him of the lady's flight, and imposing upon him the duty of securing her person, with the leave of his Sicilian majesty, with whom he was to use his utmost influence to have her sent back to her own husband. So, immediately requesting an audience, the ambassador expounded his master's wishes on the subject; and the king, having verified the fact, expressed the greatest readiness to remand the fugitives, since it would afford pleasure to his ally, from whom, at that time, he was desirous of obtaining some essential favours. What were the feelings, then, of the unhappy party, who imagining that they had secured their escape, found they had rushed upon their own destruction, and were to be consigned into the hands of an offended and relentless enemy! The heart of Coppo was torn with distraction for his friend, while the lovers uttered the most piteous cries and prayers, pleading also, that they were united in faith and in marriage, both deserving of freedom, and both christians. All, however, was of no avail, for the king, anxious to conciliate the Dey, commanded them to be re-embarked

forthwith in the same vessel, under the care of one of his own captains, who had orders to land them in Barbary, and deposit them safely, with the king's compliments, in the hands of their lawful sovereign. And already were they proceeding upon their wretched voyage, with calm and favourable breezes, from which they turned in anguish to the shores that were receding from their view ; when fortune, as if weary at length of her continued persecutions, again raised a furious tempest before the vessel had time to make the port, and drove her back until she reached the Tyrrhene sea, near Leghorn, where, broken and dismantled, she became the easy prey of some Pisan corsairs. But noble ransom being offered them by the unfortunate captives, they were shortly afterwards put on shore, and at length arrived in safety, with some portion of their remaining treasures, at the city of Pisa. There, owing to the infinite dangers and sufferings to which she had been subjected, the hapless lady was seized with a fever that had nearly proved mortal, and it was the incessant care and affection of Niccolo alone that succeeded in restoring her. Upon her recovery, they bent their way towards Florence, where, on their arrival, they were received with the utmost surprise and the warmest congratulations by all their friends ; while feasts and re-

velry on all sides, testified the joy that was felt for their return. When the health of his beloved proselyte and benefactress was a little recruited, Niccolo kindly proposed, for their more complete satisfaction, that his beloved wife should be again baptized in the church of San Giovanni; and being christened by the name of Beatrice, she was once more solemnly espoused by him, with the utmost splendour and magnificence, according to the minutest rites and ceremonies of the holy church. At the same time, in order to bind their interests in a still nearer union, Niccolo bestowed upon his friend Coppo the hand of his sister, who, in addition to the charms of beauty, boasted likewise all the virtues of her brother. Beatrice, delighted with every thing she saw and heard, even beyond the picture held out to her by the happy Niccolo, soon made such rapid progress in every desirable virtue and accomplishment, as to astonish the Florentine ladies by the richness and vivacity of her ideas, and the charms of her manners and conversation. In a short time, also, she became so fondly attached to her new sister-in-law, as to render it difficult to decide whether their friendship or that of their husbands was the most rare and exemplary. Certain it is, that the two happy pairs passed their days in such entire

amity and peace, that there never occurred the slightest cause of dissatisfaction or division, an instance of domestic happiness highly deserving of commemoration, and which attracted universal admiration and applause. Indeed, so far from becoming disagreeable to, or weary of each other, they appeared daily to take more pleasure in one another's company, and more intent upon amusing, gratifying, and instructing themselves and their friends around them, in such a manner, that, becoming extremely popular with all parties, they exercised the most happy and beneficial influence over the manners and feelings of the people of Florence.

NOVELLA X.

IT was a privilege enjoyed by the relater of the tenth, or last story of the day, in Boccaccio's Decameron, occasionally to leave the beaten track, and enter upon any fresh subject which might be thought most agreeable; an example, which in the present instance, as I am the last in the series, I intend to follow. Proclaiming a truce, therefore, to our love adventures, which have occupied us nearly the whole of the day, I wish to amuse you with some account of a certain friar of Novara, who flourished about twenty years ago. You hardly need to be told, that, among all ranks and conditions of men, the good people to be met with are more rare than those of an opposite description; so that I trust you will not be very greatly surprised to hear, that in the holy brotherhood there are not a few who fall short of perfection, and even of what the rules of their order require. Nor ought we to think it strange that the vice of avarice, which bears such sway in the courts of princes, both spiritual and temporal, should sometimes take up her residence in the cloisters of the poor brothers.

It happened that in the town of Novara, a very

pretty city of Lombardy, there dwelt a rich widow lady, whose name was Donna Agnes. She had worn her weeds with persevering sorrow ever since the death of her dear Gaudenzio de' Piotti, who, besides her dowry, which was very handsome for a lady in those parts, had left her other possessions that put her very much at her ease, even though she should prefer worshipping his memory to any new connexion. She had borne him moreover four boys, whose education would now devolve upon her alone. But this excellent and considerate husband was scarcely laid at rest in the ground, before tidings of this his last will and testament reached the ears of the superior of the convent of San Nazaro, situated a little way beyond the gate of San Agabio. This same good monk was commissioned by the society to keep an eye upon testamentary donations; so that no widow should pass him by without affording at least her mite, and assuming the girdle of the seraphic St. Francis. Having been once admitted as lay sisters into their order, many of these devotees were in the habit of frequenting their congregation, and offering up prayers for the souls of their deceased friends, expressing their gratitude to the poor brethren in the shape of fine Bologna sausages and pasties, and were occasionally induced, in their zeal for

imitating the good works of the blessed Fra Ginepro and other renowned saints, to endow some little chapel for the convenience of the order, where they might represent the glorious history of St. Francis, as he was seen preaching to the birds in the desert, engaged in kneading the holy bread, or at the moment when the angel Gabriel brought him his saintly slippers. The chapel once built, it was not very difficult to raise sufficient, from the same quarter, to defray an annual festival in honour of the saint's holy stripes, and to celebrate every Monday a mass for the souls of all his followers who might still happen to be suffering the pains of purgatory. But as, consistent with their profession of poverty, the good brethren could not openly avail themselves of these gifts, they adopted the ingenious method of endowing their holy buildings, and holding the property as appurtenant to the sacristies, imagining they could thus as easily impose upon heaven, as upon us poor credulous mortals here below. As if their real motives, and all the envy, pride, and covetousness, concealed under the large cowls of pursy monks, were not fully as evident to an all-seeing eye, as those vices that are more clearly apparent in the broad light of the day. These are they, who instead of begging their bread barefoot, or preaching to the

people, as they ought to do, wherever they appear, prefer sitting at ease in their well stored monasteries; supplied with delicate changes of shoes and linen, some five pair of Cordova slippers, silk stockings, and sweet, dainty fare. And when they can muster sufficient exertion, or it is quite necessary for them to go abroad, they mount their mules, as elegantly attired as themselves, or pretty palfreys whose paces are of the easiest, so as never to produce a feeling of fatigue. They are equally cautious not to burden the mind with too much study, finding the truth of the scripture observation, that it is indeed "a weariness to the flesh;" besides the holy dread they entertain, as in the case of Lucifer, of its producing pride, and thus incurring the risk of a fall from their state of monastic innocence and simplicity.

But, to return to our devout inspector of the property of rich widows, it is certain that he followed so closely in pursuit of the lady in question, and made so much noise in his poor wooden clogs, that for peace-sake she was soon compelled to add her name to those of the third order, an arrangement from which the poor brethren drew a regular supply of alms, besides warm jackets, and richly worked tunics. But not content with this, and imagining nothing done while any thing remained to do, he placed

monks round her all day long, to remind her of the superior efficacy of endowing a whole chapel, if she really consulted the benefit of her soul. The lady, however, having four sons, at first thought it rather hard to rob them of their substance in favour of the monks, and being, like some of her sex, by no means liberally inclined, she tried to amuse them for some time with fair words, though resolved, in her own mind, to stick fast to her property. Just about the period that the good brethren imagined they had brought her over to their purpose, and succeeded in obtaining the mention of their new chapel in her will, it happened that she was taken suddenly unwell, and in spite of all medical assistance, died. Before breathing her last, she sent in haste for the superior of San Nazaro, to receive her dying confessions; who, imagining he was now about to reap the harvest of his toils, in laying such long siege to the widow's purse, very frankly told her how necessary it was, after having made confession, to shew a little more charity towards her own soul, while it remained yet in her power, and not to rely upon her sons offering up any sort of compensation for her sins in the way of alms and masses, after her decease. It was his duty to remind her of the fate of her friend Donna Leonora Caccia, the wife of

Messer Cervagio, doctor of laws, who, at the time he spoke, was suffering in purgatory, through the wicked neglect of her sons, who had never burnt a single taper since the day of her funeral. Alarmed at the idea of being in a similar predicament, and feeling extremely weak and troubled, such was the impression of the monk's oratory, that she was just on the point of yielding her consent, and calling for her will; but still balancing between the opposite interests of her soul and of her family, she declared that she would make up her mind before he should return again on the morrow. The good priest, shaking his head, reminded her of the danger of delay in a case of such paramount importance, and under pain of great future suffering, hinted at the propriety of the alteration being made before his return the next day. In the mean while, the widow's second son, Agabio, having in some way got scent of this negotiation, communicated his fears to his brothers, who agreed with him that it was of the utmost consequence to overhear what should take place on the priest's return. So when Fra Serafino, the superior, arrived the next day, with the intention of concluding the bargain, Agabio took a station which enabled him to hear every word that passed; and such, he found, was the effect of the monk's elo-

quence, and so dreadful his denunciations of purgatory, that the poor lady was glad to receive absolution upon condition of leaving the sum of two hundred ducats, for the purpose of endowing and ornamenting a chapel. Another hundred was to be appropriated to the purchase of the sacred vessels, and other articles, requisite to the celebration of mass in proper style, besides an annual festival, and a service for the souls of the dead. To these was to be added a small farm, situated very conveniently for the use of the poor brotherhood, at Camigliano, worth at least three thousand ducats; in consideration of which, having arranged every thing necessary respecting the title, and that the whole should be drawn up by a regular notary, as soon as possible, the happy monk absolved the good widow, and took his leave.

Agabio, who had heard all that passed, lost no time in acquainting his brothers, all of whom were of opinion that it was not an affair to be trifled with. So, after consulting some of their friends, they proceeded to their mother's chamber, and with some difficulty, by help of a less fastidious confessor, who absolved her on easier terms, they prevailed upon her to leave her will as it was. This done, they next despatched a confidential servant, with a message to the wily monk in their mother's name, begging that he would

no longer give himself the trouble of calling, as her sons, having got to hear the nature of his business, were bent upon doing him some grievous mischief, in case they should meet with him at her house ; that she begged him at the same time not to make himself at all anxious upon the subject, as the holy brotherhood would find every thing arranged to their entire satisfaction in her last bequest.

Upon receiving these tidings, Fra Serafino took the hint, and giving himself no little credit for his successful negociation, he abstained from troubling the lady further. But in a few days he had the gratification of hearing that she had breathed her last, and directly hastened, according to his instructions, to the house of Ser Tomeno, the notary, who had already been apprised by Agabio in what way he was to act. By him he was informed that he ought immediately to wait upon Agabio and his brothers, into whose hands he had committed the will the day before, when he might possibly hear of something to his advantage. Without replying a single word, the delighted friar hastened to inspect its contents, and after duly condoling with the young men upon their loss, he came at once to the point, and requested Agabio to let him see the will. The latter, expressing his surprise at this question, requested to

know the reason of his troubling himself with affairs that no way concerned him, an observation at which the holy man began to express his dissatisfaction, but was threatened by Agabio with no very pleasing consequences, in case he did not forthwith proceed to take sanctuary in his own monastery. Not in the least daunted, however, at this reception, the wily monk made his bow with a malicious smile, and departed without deigning to say a word; and calling upon a certain Messer Niccola, procurator to the order, he put five soldi into his hands, and requested to know his opinion. Having heard the particulars of the case, Messer Niccola, without further hesitation, sent a summons to Ser Tomeno, Agabio's notary, citing him to appear before the bishop's vicar, with a copy of the last will and testament of the deceased.

Ser Tomeno, the moment he had perused this document, lost no time in acquainting Agabio with the progress of the affair, and he, desiring nothing better, took his attorney along with him, and called privately at the house of the vicar, who happening to be a particular friend of his, heard the whole proceedings from beginning to end, the good friar's long and difficult negotiations, Agabio's stratagems to counteract him, and the commencement of the present

process. Now the vicar, as belonging to the order of the priesthood, was by no means overburdened with affection towards the friars, and expressed his satisfaction at hearing what had past. Upon the following day, at the hour appointed for the parties to make their appearance, came Fra Serafino, accompanied by the procurator of his convent, both of whom were extremely noisy, and bent upon obtaining a sight of the will immediately. Agabio, in answer to their appeal, said: "Good Messer Vicar, may it please your reverence, I have not the slightest objection to the production of the will, provided that all the parties whose names are therein mentioned, consent to fulfil the articles, according to the letter; of whatever nature they may be."

"Say no more," interrupted the vicar; "all that is very clear; for our laws are very particular on this point, and whoever comes in for the benefit, must also incur the inconvenience of such bequests. Let us have this document, then; it is only what is lawful and reasonable!" and Agabio, instantly taking a scroll out of his pocket, handed it to the opposite notary for perusal. After running over the leading particulars relating to the heirs, and several legacies inserted for the purpose of giving the whole a greater air of reality, he came to the part that concerned the

friar, the tenor of which ran in the following manner :
“ ITEM, I will and bequeath, for the better preservation of my sons’ fortune, and for the general benefit of all the widows in Novara, that there be given by the hands of my own children, the amount of fifty lashes upon the back of Fra Serafino, at this time being the guardian or superior of the convent of San Nazaro ; and that the said lashes be of the best and soundest in the power of my sons’ hands to inflict. And be it further stated, that these are intended to serve as an example to the rest of his brotherhood, how they venture in future to impose upon poor credulous women, or feeble old dotards, basely and maliciously persuading them to disinherit and impoverish their own flesh and blood, for the purpose of ornamenting cells and chapels.”

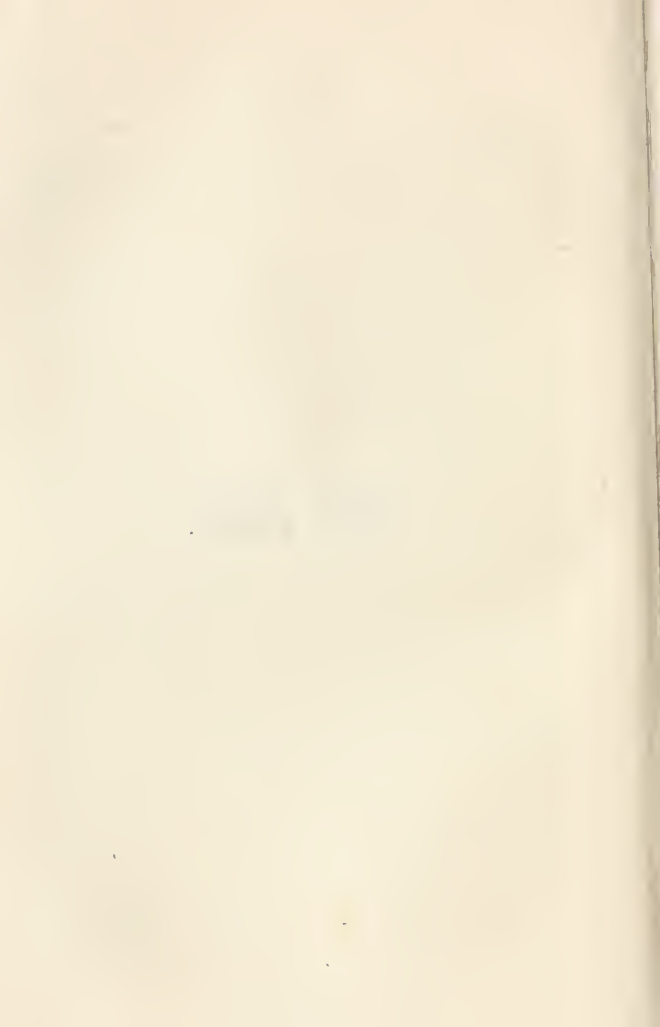
Here the risible muscles of the notary would permit him to proceed no farther, and his laugh was speedily caught, and re-echoed through the whole court ; insomuch that the poor friar, overwhelmed with ridicule and confusion, sought to make good his escape, and find the way back to his convent ; though fully resolved in his own mind to bring the whole affair, in form of appeal, before the high apostolic chamber. But he was not doomed to end the matter in quite so honourable a manner, for Agabio, seizing

fast hold of his gown, exclaimed, "Tarry a little, holy father! why are you in such a hurry? I am come here for the purpose of fulfilling the conditions of the will, and these must be complied with;" and then appealing to the vicar, while he held the good father tight by his band, "I require to know from you, as the judge, why father Serafino should not be entitled to the benefit of his bequest, mounted on the great horse, and receive from my hands the amount of the legacy due to him. If this be not granted, I shall feel bound to appeal to a superior tribunal against the undue partiality and injustice of this court." The good vicar, receiving the whole of this with an air of mock solemnity, turning towards Agabio, replied, "My good Messer Agabio, your beneficent intentions respecting the worthy father, no one surely can dispute; but I dare say he will be inclined to rest satisfied with them, without insisting upon the execution of the deed; in particular, as it might possibly bring some degree of scandal upon his cloth, while at the same time that it would be painful to him, such inheritance would produce no sort of benefit to the holy brotherhood. Besides, if he be so truly disinterested, as not to wish to accept the kind bequest of your mother, I hardly see how you can venture to force it upon him, and I would rather

permit him to take his leave, with the noble consciousness that he bears no marks of your favour along with him."

Upon this hint Fra Serafino acted, and full of mingled rage, fear, and vexation, retreated to his own abode, which he did not again quit for many days, out of apprehension of the ridicule of the people. His punishment, however, was followed by the desired effect ; for, from that time forth, he was never known to solicit widow ladies for their fortunes to endow chapels, especially such as had families of sons, by whom he might again run the risk of being severely handled. As it was, he had the good fortune to escape martyrdom from their hands, and contrived to digest his spleen and disappointment by patience, as every good christian ought. According, however, to a different version of the story, trumped up, it is supposed, by some of the friars, for the credit of their order, and as I was myself informed by one of them, that same wicked vicar had soon reason to repent of the part he bore in the affair, having to pay no less a fine than five hundred florins.

Pietro Fortini,



PIETRO FORTINI.*

ONE of the most lively, and we are concerned to add, one of the most exceptionable authors of Italian tales, who flourished during the sixteenth century, was Pietro Fortini. A solitary specimen is, with some difficulty, here presented to the reader. It is impossible to regret the comparative rarity and obscurity of the remainder. From the critical observations of Signor Gaetano Poggiali, we learn that few notices relating to the life and writings of this novelist have survived to us; nor will this prove any great additional source of regret. The cause of this has been referred by the same writer to the want of a due appreciation of the value of literary memorials by the city of Sienna, a neglect which has since been very amply and laudably supplied by Ugurgieri, Pecci, and Gigli, and in particular, by Benvoglianti, whose persevering researches have often been rewarded with success. In the present instance, however, the

* *Le Giornate delle Novelle de' Novizi*, divise in otto Giornate, &c.; and, *Le Piacevoli ed Amoroze Notti dei Novizi*, &c.

year of Fortini's birth still remains uncertain, though it is probable that he wrote during the earlier half of the sixteenth century; and from the entry of a date, remaining in the convent of St. Dominic, his decease seems to have occurred in the year 1562. He was descended from a good family, of some repute and influence at Sienna, and was in easy circumstances, as would appear from his frequent residence at one of his villas near that city, named Monaciano, yet in possession of some of the author's descendants. Judging, however, from one of his letters addressed to Braccioni, as well as from one of his novels, and from some poetical pieces interspersed throughout his *Novelliere*, the tranquillity of his life was destined to suffer interruption; an event, of which the particulars are unknown, but which was most probably connected with those revolutionary movements which preceded the downfall of his native state.

It was during his residence in the country that his fictitious productions seem to have been composed, whether in honourable banishment, or remaining at his villa out of choice, does not clearly appear. Though they are mentioned as *racconti di fatti accaduti, più che favolosi*, related in turn by five young ladies and two gentlemen; yet we would hope,

for the credit of the age, of the relaters, and of the hearers, that they were rather fabulous than true. The style, if not very pure, is extremely lively and pleasing, and each novel is closed with poetical pieces of more than common merit. They were published at Sienna, but the date of the first editions does not appear.

PIETRO FORTINI.

NOVELLA XIII.

IN the noble city of Spoleti, in Umbria, there resided, not many years ago, a young man of the name of Anton Luigi Migliorelli, nobly born, but of a strange and whimsical disposition. Being also of a sanguine temperament, combined with too little judgment, he had the misfortune to imagine himself in love with a very beautiful and accomplished young lady, sprung from one of the first families in Spoleti, whose name was Fiordespina. What rendered the affair worse, she had already bestowed her hand in marriage upon another, a wealthy citizen of good descent, called Filolauro, from which his lady most generally went by the name of Fiordespina Lauri. In point of manly beauty and accomplishments, Filolauro was in no way unworthy of possessing so charming a companion; nor do I believe that throughout all Italy there was a similar instance of conjugal union, happiness, and fidelity. Such indeed were the mutual sacrifices, the devotion, and tenderness

which they invariably displayed, as to afford a perfect pattern of the respective characters, and the conduct to be observed in so intimate an union. Their happiness seemed as if it were too exquisite and unalloyed to last; and the secret fiend that was about to invade the Eden of their love and repose, was already at work, inspiring the soul of Anton Luigi with thoughts equally dangerous to their safety and their honour. Ardently bent upon the pursuit of every object in which he engaged, and having frequent opportunities of enjoying the society, and observing the charms and accomplishments, of the lovely Fiordespina, he grew so deeply enamoured of them, that in a short time, he felt himself unable to control the expression of his feelings.

Yet, after having adopted every expedient in his power, all the arts and flatteries of which he was the master, he had the mortification to find that he not only made no progress in her good opinion, but that she did not even deign to notice his numerous efforts to conciliate and please her. Equally piqued and impassioned, he vowed to be revenged upon her supposed pride and indifference; while he was compelled at the same time to conceal his attentions as much as possible, as the manners of the people of Spoleti were far more strict in this respect than those of many

other places; persons of both sexes being in the habit of revenging themselves upon very slight provocation, and even of bearing arms, when occasion required, in open field against their enemies. And there is no point upon which they are more eager to proceed to extremities, than in regard to the honour of their women, so that they will scarcely permit the breath of heaven to play upon the faces of their married dames of rank, while the husbands, on the other hand, are not permitted to shew the least regard for single ladies. Thus our unfortunate lover found himself rather awkwardly situated; his feelings being about as unpleasant as those of a culprit preparing for his final journey, since his beloved Fiordesolina paid no more attention to him, than if there had been no such person in the world; a behaviour which he felt far more difficult to bear than if she had honoured him with her resentment, or even her aversion and contempt.

In this dilemma he believed the wisest as well as the shortest way would be to put a period to his existence; but always, when he was on the point of executing his threat, the idea that he was for ever leaving the beautiful Fiordesolina flashed across his mind, and he relinquished it. Still he conceived it quite incumbent upon him, either to die like a true lover,

or win the lady's regard, and with this magnanimous resolution, he watched his first opportunity of obtaining a final interview with the lady. Happening to hear that Filolauro was about to accompany a party of young men on an excursion of pleasure into the country, he had no sooner watched the servant who followed him fairly out of sight, than he hastened to his house, but had the mortification to perceive the beloved object in company with two of her youthful companions. Upon this his exasperation was such as to mount to a degree of phrenzy, and being in a most favourable mood for listening to the counsels of our great adversary, who is never known to neglect such happy opportunities of adding to the number of his subjects, he resolved in one way or other to bring the matter to a conclusion, whether it were by dagger, rope, or poison, that very evening. With this view he continued to keep watch, until after Filolauro's return, who being accustomed to walk out with his friends, sometimes as far as the Borgo San Maffio, when the evening was fine, upon this occasion did not take leave of them until near midnight. His beautiful wife, whose thoughts were ever with him in his absence, anxious at the lateness of the hour, was now eagerly looking out for him, after having prepared what viands she imagined would prove most

agreeable on his return. Filolauro had just reached the piazza near the fort, close to his own house, when he was met by Antonio Luigi, full of the most desperate designs; who, drawing his sword, cried out, in great fury: "At last, villain, thou art dead!" at the same moment wounding him severely. "Ah, traitor," exclaimed the other, "this to me!" and rushing upon him, he closed with him before he could make his escape. The noble lady, overhearing some disturbance, and recognizing her consort's voice, with the courage that distinguished the ladies of Spoleti, instantly seized her husband's javelin that lay at hand, and rushed to the door. There she indeed beheld him struggling in the grasp of his assassin, while his blood stained the ground upon which they fought; and sufficiently distinguishing the combatants by the light of the moon, with the strength of an Amazon, she passed the weapon through the body of Anton Luigi at a single blow. He instantly fell dead at her feet, while she, crying out to her husband that he was only wounded, besought him to take refuge in the house. By the time she had assisted him back, and restored the javelin to its place, a numerous crowd was collecting upon the spot, some of whom, observing the way they took, followed them into the house, where they found the lady attempting to

staunch her husband's wounds, at the same time trying to encourage him, and calling out for assistance. Discovering no weapon but the sword lying by the side of the deceased, they were unable to account for what they saw ; and having borne the body of Anton Luigi into an adjoining church, and procured surgical aid for the wounded man, the people gradually dispersed.

On the following morning, the governor, hearing of the homicide, and no one being accused of it, thought it somewhat strange, and instituted a more strict inquiry. Being a native of Lucca, of severe character, and not very kindly disposed towards the ladies of Spoleti, he despatched his officers, at once, to the residence of the fair Fiordesquina, with orders to seize her, together with her husband, the last of whom, wounded as he was, they threw into a dungeon. His unhappy wife was next conducted, bound, into the hall allotted for the execution of assassins, where, the evidence of some persons in the crowd being taken, she was actually condemned, by her merciless judge, to suffer the torture of the question. But rather than accuse either her husband or herself of having committed such an act, which she had reasons for knowing that her inexorable judge would never admit to have been done in self-defence, she chose to

submit, with the fortitude of a martyr, to every thing that his cruelty could devise. Moved with pity at her sufferings, several of the spectators voluntarily came forward to prove that no weapon, except that of the deceased, had been found upon the spot, and that it was hardly likely that a single woman could have deprived a soldier of his own sword, and of his life.

To this the savage tyrant only replied, that such was more probably the case, than that so noble a youth should have destroyed himself: and upon this he commanded the executioners to proceed. When, however, the populace, who believed her to be innocent, heard her renewed cries, there ran a confused murmur among the crowd, that, gradually assuming a louder and more angry tone, reminded the cruel governor that he had to deal with the proud and daring natives of Spoleti. Finding his victim resolutely bent against confession, he began to take the alarm, and ordering her to be set free, he consoled himself with the hope of inflicting still heavier punishment upon her husband. For this purpose he had him brought forth, and condemned to suffer yet more terrific pains than had been inflicted upon his wife. The moment, however, she beheld him in the presence of their ferocious tormentor, she was unable to

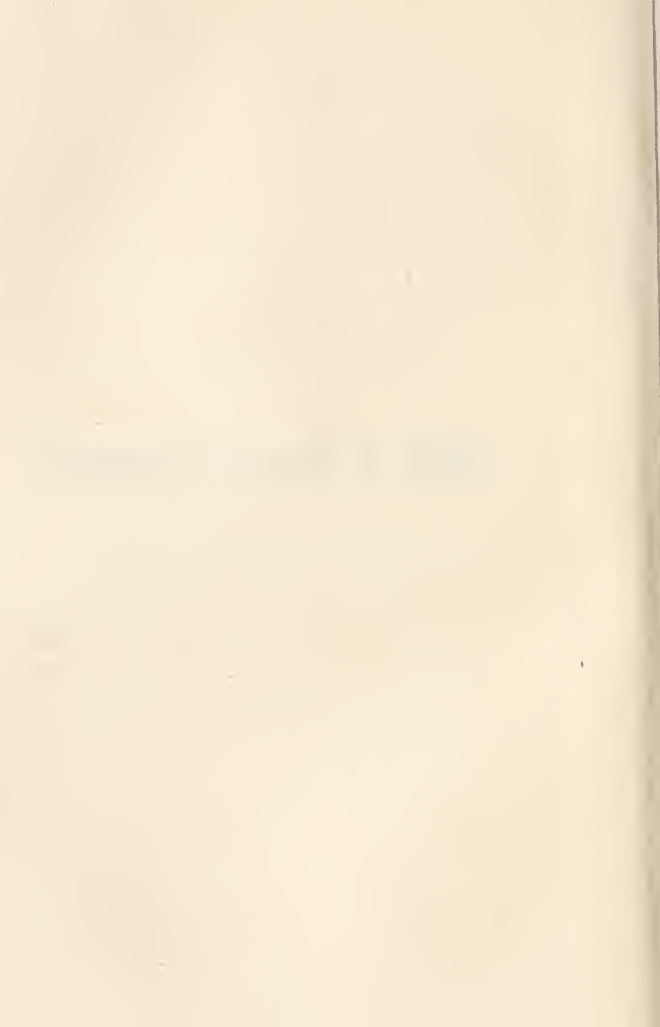
hear the very idea, much less the sight, of the most beloved object on earth, sharing with her the same fate. Although instant death became the penalty of her confession, yet, in order to spare him the suffering she had herself so nobly borne, she thus addressed the governor: "Unbind that gentleman, signor! Never let it be said that a savage and remorseless tyrant, such as thou art, had it in his power to inflict his savage torments upon the limbs of my honoured lord! No, it was I who did the deed. Hear me, I say! I alone smote the assassin of my husband dead at my feet. Oh! ye just heavens, ye noble people of Spoleti, be near me; aid me in my utter woe; let him not deprive me of the only object that is dear to these eyes." At once surprised and grieved to hear her declare herself guilty of an act by a confession which the severest tortures had failed to wring from her, the spectators, as well as the governor himself, struck with the excessive proof of affection which it displayed, were inclined to consider it as little less than miraculous. What must have been the excess of tenderness and attachment, that could excite the soul of a delicate woman to such an unexampled degree of heroism and magnanimity, as to confess out of pity and affection for her husband, what she would otherwise have concealed, under the infliction of tor-

ture and of death itself! To such an appeal, even the heart of the governor, callous and ferocious as he was, could no longer be insensible. Taken by surprise, astonished at the grandeur and beauty of sentiment it displayed, and of which he had formed no previous idea, after remaining lost in doubt and wonder for some moments, his aspect assumed a perfectly opposite expression, and in milder tones than he had ever before perhaps uttered, he commanded the officers to unbind her husband. He next sent for the father of the deceased, requesting to know what course he wished to be pursued. The poor old man, thus unhappily deprived of his son, yet aware that no cause of enmity had subsisted between the families, nobly came forward to state every thing he knew relating to the unfortunate passion of his son, and boldly taxed the governor with the most culpable conduct, in having omitted to receive his evidence, until he had unjustly condemned the innocent to suffer. At the same time he tenderly embraced the unhappy prisoners, and weeping over the guilty conduct of his son, appealed to the feelings of the spectators, conjuring them to join in soliciting a free pardon, if pardon it could be called, where no offence had been committed, at the hands of the governor. The relenting feelings of the latter at length yielded

to the energy and truth of the old man's appeal ; for, having liberated the captives, he descended from his judgment-seat, and struggling with contending emotions, turned away from the spectators, and soon disappeared.



Nobels of Francesco Sansobino.



FRANCESCO SANSOVINO.

THIS novelist was the son of the distinguished sculptor and architect, Jacopo Sansovino; and was born at Rome in the year 1521. Pope Julius III. is said to have officiated as his sponsor, at the sacred font. He was first brought up to the profession of the law; but as he had no inclination for that study, he made but little progress in it, and is supposed to have soon after relinquished it upon his marriage, when he took up his residence at Venice, where he lived till the year 1586. He there produced many of his novels, and devoted himself altogether to literary labours and pursuits. He was a voluminous writer, which, however, by no means atones for the want of genuine merit, a failing, of which he has, not without justice, been accused; his tales affording few specimens worthy of selection. Their want of originality is one of the least faults ascribed to them, inasmuch as he has been charged with having mutilated and disguised his borrowed subjects in the most uncere- monious manner. The best claim that writers of this description have upon our notice, (and, it must be

allowed, there are too many such among the Italian novelists,) consists in the copious materials with which they supply the critic, whose delightful task it is to detect, by long and minute labours, a few rare gems, sparkling amidst a mass of inferior productions.

The character of Sansovino, as a writer, has been very fairly appreciated by Apostolo Zeno, in his learned annotations to the well known *Biblioteca Italiana* of Fontanini. He there observes, that a great number of the stories inserted in Sansovino's collection as his own, are obviously to be referred to the *Decameron* of Boccaccio; and that he has, likewise, taken frequent liberties with those of Bandello, without noticing the name of that author; though many other writers are mentioned in the list of authors whom he has adduced, as supplying the materials of his work. Still, Sansovino is by no means a solitary instance of the predatory genius of the novelists of the sixteenth century, indulged at the expense of the earlier and better writers of Italy. Nor, while La Fontaine and other French writers, as well as our English dramatists, drew so largely from the same source, do we see any cogent reason why the Italians themselves should not be allowed to enjoy a reciprocal traffic in their own national productions.

FRANCESCO SANSOVINO.

SEVENTH DAY, NOVELLA VI.

OTTO, the third emperor of that name, on his return from Rome, where he had just been invested with the imperial dignity by the reigning pontiff, Gregory V., touched at Florence on his way to his German dominions. The whole of Tuscany, then under the imperial sway, was committed to the government of Ugone, Marquess of Brandenburgh, cousin-german to the emperor, a man of approved reputation, and esteemed for his love of justice by all ranks of people. Now it happened, during the emperor's stay, that the festival of San Giovanni, the Baptist, the tutelary saint of Florence, was every where celebrated throughout the city, and the concourse of guests at the palace was likewise very great. Among these, the emperor was particularly struck with a beautiful young lady, daughter to a gentleman of the name of Berti dei Ravignani. She was esteemed the most lovely and accomplished maiden, not only in Florence, but throughout all Tuscany. The eyes of the company

were frequently rivetted upon her, and those of the emperor never once wandered from her face. Such was the impression he received, that, unable to detect the least fault in her face or form, and charmed with the sweetness of her manners, he gave way to the most unbounded admiration, in spite of the restraints imposed upon him by his birth and station. The more he gazed, and the more he conversed with her, the deeper sunk the emotions he began to entertain; until, at the close of the festival, on taking his leave of her, he returned to his own palace silent and unhappy; his whole soul absorbed in the recollection of the exquisite charms, both of mind and person, of the lady he had just seen. Such influence over him did this passion at length assume, that so far from being able to extirpate it, he could no longer disguise his feelings; and doubtful only in what manner to proceed, he resolved to consult one of the most prudent gentlemen of his bedchamber. To him he committed the task of obtaining further particulars concerning the beloved object; giving him, at the same time, proper instructions, by which he might discover her. In this manner he shortly became acquainted with her father's name, and the whole genealogy of her family. The gentleman was of a good extraction, but in somewhat confined circumstances,

and by no means of a disposition, either by his industry or his wit, to improve them.

Scorning the idea of acting in any way either artfully or dishonourably, yet being determined to pursue his object, the emperor resolved to hint the affair to the lady's father through his confidant, and proceed throughout the whole transaction, both with regard to the father and the daughter, candidly and openly. With this view, having learned that his mission to Messer Berti, owing to the expectations of wealth and influence which it excited in his mind, had met with a favourable reception, the emperor invited him to his royal table; and lavishing upon him every mark of attention, soon entered into familiar discourse, though without alluding, in the most distant manner, to the subject nearest his heart. Such marks of favour would have been quite sufficient to dazzle the judgment, and warp the virtuous feelings of a wiser and better man than poor Berti dei Ravignani; and so elevated was he with these sudden glimpses of court favour, that he could not forbear boasting of them, on his return home, to his daughter. He soon afterwards announced, with a very consequential air, that he intended to invite the emperor and a few friends to dinner; that he was already extremely well disposed towards him;

that she must take care to put on her best looks, and it was impossible to say to what height of fortune they might not aspire. Intelligent and virtuous as she was beautiful, the fair Gualdrada on hearing these words, though some suspicions flashed across her mind, disdained to notice them, being determined to rely upon herself, and to act as circumstances might require. On the appointed day, therefore, the emperor attended, with a single gentleman, the summons of Messer Berti, to feast with him at his house, where he had the pleasure of being introduced into the society of the beautiful object of all his hopes. Here, while attempting to make himself as agreeable as possible, the emperor had occasion to observe the nobleness and simplicity of her mind and sentiments, no less than her surpassing beauty and the artless graces of her person. And, however desirous of disguising the warmth of his feelings, from motives of delicacy, heightened by the high opinion which he began to entertain of her, he nevertheless could not refrain from availing himself of an opportunity of avowing his sentiments, declaring that he had struggled long and painfully with them, and that he could not help telling her so, however fearful he might be of incurring her displeasure. He trusted she would consider, that in all countries and all ages, the most cau-

tious, as well as the most lofty, of human characters, had at some period of their lives, experienced the same irresistible sentiments which now impelled him, against his better feelings and judgment, to admire, and to avow his admiration and his passion; a passion, which, however unjust and ungenerous it was, in vain he attempted to suppress. He urged that so many illustrious instances, both in Greek and Roman history, would in some measure plead his excuse; the Cæsars, the Hannibals, the Massinissas, the Antonys; the last of whom he verily believed had no apology to offer for his weakness, at all equal to that which stood arrayed in superior charms before him. "And if you deign not now to listen to me," continued the emperor, as he threw himself at the lady's feet, "I feel that my sceptre and my diadem, with all their pomp, are worthless in my eyes; take them; or take at least more than they are worth—the heart that is above them all."

A variety of emotions chased each other over the features of the fair girl, as she listened to the words of the emperor; gratified pride and vanity, terror, shame, and doubt, were all there; but these were again overpowered and absorbed in the more overwhelming sense of love; a love, which, although she ventured not to avow it, clung to another object. Re-

leasing her hand, therefore, from that of the emperor, she made no reply ; but, turning away, burst into tears. Her royal lover, nearly as much distressed as herself, now entreated her forgiveness, accusing himself of the greatest thoughtlessness and cruelty, in having thus inconsiderately tried her feelings. In the most soothing and respectful terms, he entreated her to compose her mind, and fully to rely upon his humanity and honour. As there appeared to be some degree of mystery in her manner of receiving him, he said that he should feel highly gratified to be considered worthy of her confidence, however painful the sacrifice he might have to make in consequence, if, indeed, she could never return his love. Expressing her gratitude for these assurances of kindness and respect, the fair Gualdrada, fearful of offending the emperor in the avowal she was preparing to make, fell at his feet, and besought him to forgive her temerity in venturing to refuse his love. She then confessed, that on the same night of the festival in which she had been presented to his imperial highness, Guido, a young cavalier of his court, had also seen and sought her love: that they had since had several interviews, but that neither of them possessing wealth, she had not ventured to make known his offer to her father. Without a moment's hesitation, the emperor,

thanking her for this proof of confidence, and recovering all his former generosity and magnanimity of feeling, instantly despatched orders for the young cavalier to attend him. On his arrival, presenting the astonished soldier to the weeping and blushing Gualdrada, he observed, with his usual mildness: "It is my pleasure, Guido, that you should espouse this lady, the daughter of a noble, though impoverished house;" and the next day, holding a splendid festival in honour of their nuptials, he himself presented the hand of the fair Gualdrada to his favourite Guido, and conferred upon him a handsome fortune.

TENTH DAY, NOVELLA VIII.

THERE were once two spruce young gentlemen who had more reason to pique themselves upon their good descent, than upon the strength of their mental endowments. To use a familiar expression much applied by the good people of Milan, they both belonged to the parish of San Simpliciano, and from a great similarity of disposition, they had contracted so strict an intimacy, that they were seldom to be seen asunder. When they happened to be in other company, they invariably aimed at leading the conversation to points of fashionable interest, in which alone they were calculated to shine; displaying their abilities in criticising the tastes of others, and indirectly complimenting each other. Their continued repetition of the same fashionable nonsense, so impertinently introduced upon all occasions, had at length the effect of wearying and disgusting all parties where their presence was tolerated. During fine summer weather, they were in the habit of wearing the most costly white silk dresses; their vests were of white velvet, their ruffs of the whitest cambric, their pantaloons and stockings of white silk, and their

hats of white velvet, with white feathers in them. And yet they had the assurance to appear thus accoutred in public, displaying their feathers with all the vanity of peacocks, as they turned arm in arm along the piazzas, full of their own perfections, and eager to attract the notice of spectators, who failed not indeed to smile as they passed; a circumstance which these young sparks placed entirely to their own credit. So pestiferous did they at length become to society, by this display of their vain folly and presumption, that whenever they appeared in a perfectly new suit, their friends invariably avoided them, as they were certain to be regaled with a dissertation upon French tailors, and the newest points and lacings then in mode. "Observe these linings, how well they sit upon this waistcoat! How brilliant are these feathers! Jove! how nobly they wave with the least breath of air. Yet they would not sit well upon any one, let me tell you; there is an art in a man's wearing a handsome dress, by no means common:" and in this way they would run on by the hour together. Among others who had thus suffered under their intolérable rattle, was a sensible and spirited young fellow, who had a peculiar enmity to the race of fops; and made a solemn vow, in a moment of irritation, to hit upon some species of revenge that

might tend to remove such a nuisance from society, and perhaps, put the authors of it on their good behaviour in future. With this view he conceived a plan which he thought could not fail to produce a happy effect, and only waited for a good opportunity of carrying it into execution.

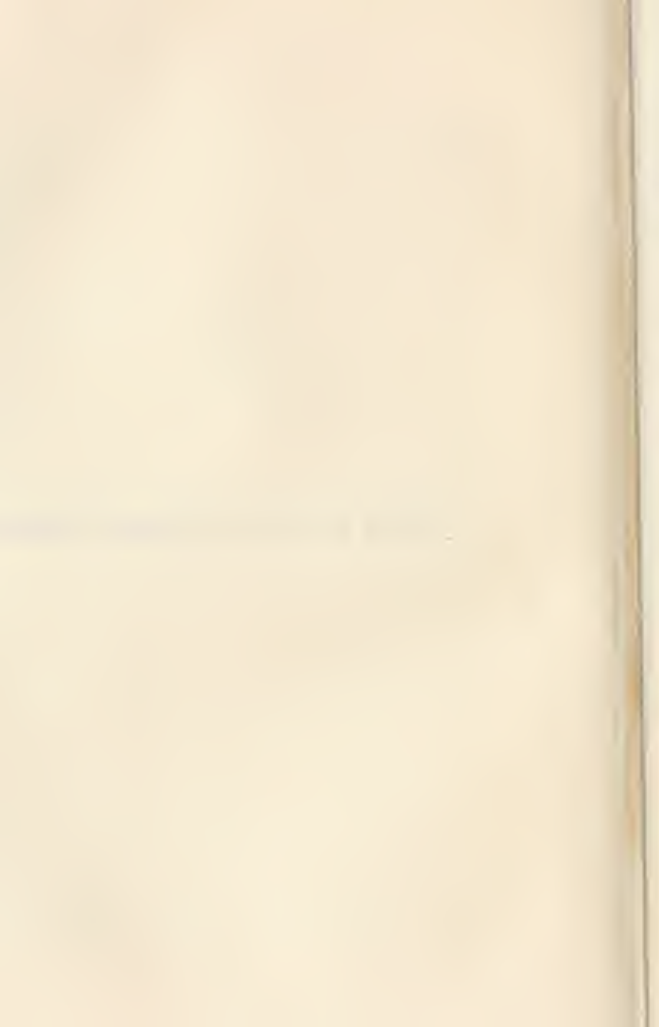
This soon occurred during the summer season, when our cavaliers were in the habit, as we have said, of assuming their white array, and when they frequented the neighbourhood of our more sensible friend's residence, in order to make themselves agreeable to a party of ladies, who were accustomed to walk near his house. One evening, therefore, he stationed himself at his garden gate, as if enjoying the coolness of the air, expecting these two giddy sparks, who in a short time came fluttering by, having displayed their plumes to the amusement of the ladies, who had now returned home. Stepping suddenly forwards, and seizing a hand of each, their friend declared he would make them his prisoners for the rest of the evening; for he had just received some excellent wine, of which he wished to have their opinion. They accepted his challenge, and, with a fashionable roll of their shoulders, accompanied him in, when, finding the servants busily clearing the dining-room, he invited the gentlemen to go and give him their

opinion of his selection of wines as they lay in his vaults, where they might also taste it perfectly cool ; observing, that he often went there when he found every other place in the world too hot for him. Each of them, then, seizing his glass, mightily amused at the idea, they followed their friend into the vaults, a servant preceding them with a torch, while his fellows were laughing heartily at their master's humour in the room above, one of whom, being entrusted with the secret, had communicated it to all the rest. Several guests in the drawing-room were likewise waiting the event, with no slight mirth exhibited in their countenances. While the glasses were filling, the two coxcombs were busily criticising the various sorts of wines submitted to their taste, and enjoying the coolness, as they rambled about the vaults. Now there was a large vessel filled with water lying near, for the purpose the host had in view. It was of such respectable dimensions as apparently to defy the exertions of a single person to remove it. Attracting the notice of his guests, the host, as if casually passing, observed, " Large as you seem to think it, there is one of my fellows who can throw it upon his shoulders, and carry it up for me whenever I please." One of our fashionables, who, likewise, piqued himself upon his bodily prowess, instantly

laid hands upon it; but finding it resist his efforts even to stir it, he pretty roundly swore he would wager a dozen of champagne, that their host was mistaken. But the fact was again as positively affirmed, till the dispute growing warm on both sides, the young gentleman declared that it would be the fairest way to put it to the proof. "I have no objection," returned the wily host; "here is the very rascal we were just speaking of; he has shoulders broad enough to bear the world: so take up that huge tub, you rogue, and walk. Shew the gentlemen the way up stairs, and take heed you do not let it fall." Forthwith he pitched it upon his neck; and the master leading the way, the two disciples of San Simpliciano somewhat imprudently followed in his rear. The steps were tolerably steep, and the porter, feigning great difficulty, just as he had reached the top, suddenly tripped, and sent the contents of the vessel back again, flying all abroad on every side. Strange was the confusion, and the sputtering, and the exclamations which the two unfortunate fashionables now made; still more strange was the sprinkling and spoiling of their delicate new garments, which truly cut a woeful figure. Instead of a pure white, they now exhibited all the colours in the rainbow, with the addition of black patches, which stuck to their

fine ermine, while they sighed and sobbed with the effects of the cold bathing they had just received. The water had been deeply impregnated with ink and assafoetida, and with other nauseous drugs, to such a degree, that neither of them was free from the taint for more than a twelvemonth. The porter, however, had the humanity to prevent the tub itself from falling, which would otherwise have totally overwhelmed the dripping sparks, who were by no means made of such stout materials, as to withstand the shock it might have occasioned; being of that brittle texture, which, like glass, will bear no rough usage, though it can receive a polish. The rogue of a porter instantly took to his heels, on viewing the awful ruin he had wrought, while his master, pretending to be in the highest degree offended at his negligence, hastened after him, leaving our poor heroes to digest the venom of his joke as they best could. But not possessing wit enough to see into the jest, they shook hands, before they left, with the happy and triumphant host; who watched them, along with some of his guests, tripping homewards as fast as they well could, shivering as if in an ague fit, to the infinite amusement of all the passengers.

Nobels of Anton-Francesco Doni.



ANTON-FRANCESCO DONI.

THE subject of our present notice flourished early in the sixteenth century, and his productions are of a very voluminous and diversified character. His novels bear only a small proportion to the rest of his writings, and with an eccentricity of humour that marked all his actions, he dispersed them at intervals, as if to relieve the tedium of his more serious lucubrations, throughout a variety of other works. In a collection very recently published in Italy,* they amount to the number of forty; various in their style and character, and extracted from a variety of sources: from his "Letters," from his work entitled "Librerie," his "Zucca," his "Marmi," his "Mondi," his "Moral Filosofia," from his vast "Commentary upon Burchiello," and from his "Pistolotti d'Amore."

"Though occasionally rude and inverted in point

* Edizione di soli esemplari ottanta, con particolare cura eseguita, per i Dilettanti delle Antiche Novelle Italiane. Edited by Bartolommeo Gamba: 1815.

of style, they are by no means wanting in spirit, and in those sallies of caustic wit and humour," observes the Italian editor, "which give so high a relish to works of a similar kind." Previous to the late collection, Doni had already been admitted into the rank of approved novelists, by Count Borromeo and the classic Poggiali; though he is seldom to be met with in the numerous selections, entitled "*Novellieri*," from the fictitious productions of some of his more popular countrymen. This, in some measure, probably arose from the same whimsical genius that seems to have influenced all his actions, many humorous traits of which are recounted, and which led him to entertain little anxiety as to the fate of his own productions. To the long list of these, contained in the Borromean catalogue, and the notices of him by Poggiali, Tiraboschi, and other writers, there is added a still more voluminous account, accompanied by critical and historical remarks, in the collection of tales before referred to. As these are, however, of far too extensive a nature to admit of further commentary here, we must confine our attention to the more popular traits of his life and character, which have been treated by some of his biographers with the same humour and eccentricity, which marked the style and manners of the original. Ti-

raboschi affords several examples of his peculiarities, though far inferior in point of singularity of language, to the pen of a still more modern writer, Signor Capugnano, who has prefixed a very amusing account of the author's life to the recent publication of his novels.

It may not prove unentertaining, perhaps, to the English reader, to extract a few specimens of this very whimsical account of a whimsical genius, taking care not to deprive either the author, or his biographer, of any portion of their burlesque humour. In this respect they will be found to be congenial spirits; the biographer vieing with his subject, in the singularity of his manner of treating it. "Doni," observes Signor Capugnano, "was born in Florence, about the year 1513, and he had no sooner cast his side teeth, than he selected for the scene of his labours, both night and day, some apartments that look out upon the left side of the Annunziata. There he was to be seen, arrayed in his long dark cloak, sometimes studious and alone, and sometimes in the company of those who had so high a conceit of him, as to think him capable of instructing Cardinal d'Arezzo himself, not long since deceased. Imagining, however, in a few years, that

his gown* sat somewhat uneasy, and looked somewhat too lugubrious, besides being so long as to prevent him from picking his way through life's dirty paths, without fear of soiling himself, he threw it off altogether, and taking a few free bounds into the air, declared that he would no longer serve any body, but in future live only according to his own laws. Then, in order that he might avoid the inquiries of every fool of an acquaintance, to know the motives and reasons of his proceedings, he set off for Venice, resolving to settle there upon his own estate, which he held under the crown of his hat. His pen was put into immediate requisition, being the only means, as he believed, of obtaining an introduction into the great audience-room of the world, 'e per godere quest'aria e quest'acqua.' But soon finding that 'faggots are not to be bound with a sausage,' he withdrew to the pleasant hills of Monselice, surrounded with a delightful view of the castle, and more useful gardens, besides a vast rocky tower, erected some ages before the grandfather of the famous Ezelino made his appearance in the world."—*Vita del Doni*, pp. 2, 3.

* He is said by Tiraboschi, to have assumed the ecclesiastical habit, which he afterwards laid aside.

Here the biographer proceeds to relate his study of astronomy and philosophy, with pursuits and inquiries of a still more free and liberal cast, which seem to have awakened the jealousy of the inquisition: “Uscì un tuono che gli scosse tutte le ossa, e gli gelò il sangue nelle vene.” There came a sound that shook him to his very bones, and congealed the blood in his veins; and he sought refuge for a period near Ancona, whence he did not again depart, until the season became more mild. He then returned to his residence at Monselice, where he closed his career at no very advanced age, in the year 1574; lamented and esteemed for his convivial disposition, his learning, and his wit.

ANTON-FRANCESCO DONI.

NOVELLA I.

THE dowager queen of Salimspruch had a daughter named Galerina, about five years of age. As she was walking in the garden, this child happened to find a young lizard, with which she ran to her mother in great glee, throwing it, as young girls are apt to do, upon her mother's lap, which so terrified the queen, that she declared in her anger, she would never consent to bestow her daughter's hand in marriage, until the reptile had grown to the size of the girl herself. She even swore by her crown that she would execute this threat; a vow which greatly displeased the governess of the fair child, who, being affectionately attached to her, vowed on her part to take the best care of the lizard she could. And such was the efficacy of this vow, that with the blessing of heaven and fine feeding, the young lizard began to grow and grow, nor ever stopped, until it became nearly as large as a crocodile. Every one was astonished on beholding it, and greatly praised the care and pru-

dence of Donna Spira, who had thus rescued her fair pupil from the fate of dying an old maid. The latter having attained to maturity, it was deemed proper to try the effect of chance in the disposal of her hand, with which view the queen resolved to kill the lizard, and extract its lungs, in order to exercise the sagacity of her suitors : “ Now,” said she, “ we will proclaim a grand feast and tournament, and invite all the cavaliers in the world, to try their fortune in the joust, and whoever afterwards guesses the name of the reptile which possessed these lungs, let him have my daughter, and half this kingdom, as a reward for his pains.”

Far and wide, throughout all cities and nations, spread these happy tidings of a royal tournament, and the marriage of queen Pilessa’s beauteous daughter. What magnificent trains of lords and dukes, counts and marquesses, of all ages and nations, were seen gathering towards the happy spot ! Long they fought, and fell, and conquered : after which, at the trumpet’s sound, were exhibited to view, in the midst of all, the lizard’s lungs, and proclamation was made with a loud voice, that whatsoever prince or lord should declare to what animal these reliques had belonged, should be entitled to the princess, and half the kingdom as her dower. Upon this, the

name of every kind of creature in the world, but the right one, was quickly pronounced, until it came to the turn of the duke of Milesi, who, enjoying the good graces of Donna Spira, had fixed his eye boldly upon her beautiful charge. The nurse at length hit upon the following ingenious method, as she thought, of acquainting him with the real nature of the poor lizard's lungs. She cast her eye upon one of the ugliest hunchbacks that was ever seen, as the least suspicious person she could employ; and beckoning him, she said, "If you will promise to be secret, I will make you one of the richest hunchbacks that was ever known; you have only to be wise, and keep silence." On receiving his promise, she gave him a purse of ducats, saying, "Hasten to the Duke of Milesi, and whisper him, on the part of the young lady, that the lungs belonged to a lizard." Upon which, repeating his oath of secrecy, the ugly hunchback left the nurse; and standing for some time apart, he considered whether it would be most prudent to inform the duke, or avail himself of the information on his own account. At length he determined that it would be better to possess half the kingdom for himself than the favour of the reigning prince; and so taking fortune by the forelock, he ventured upon the following bold manœuvre. Making his way

before the queen, he thus addressed her: "Knowing that your royal blood was ever faithful to its engagements, and relying upon the honour of your crown, I appear here to say to what creature these precious reliques belonged, and claim in return your daughter, and half the kingdom." "Certainly, it is so," replied the queen; while all the barons and courtiers burst into a loud laugh, as he pronounced them to be the lungs of a lizard. "Nay, let those laugh who win," cried the hunchback; "for I myself once brought up a lizard that grew as large as my back, until putting it one night to bed without its nightcap on, it caught such a bad cold, that before I had time to have it properly cured, it absolutely died of suffocation." The whole company upon this laughed still louder, saying, "Good, very good; was ever any thing like it?" But little Hunchback continued, "It is, however, as I say; because on dissecting my lizard, I found its lungs were made exactly the same as these." The queen replied, "Since fortune has so far favoured you, I am bound to observe my engagement; and now truly the hand of my daughter, with half of the kingdom, is your own."

Mr. Hunchback was accordingly arrayed like a courtier, and exalted above all the barons of the land: there was no denying that he was the fair prin-

cess's future spouse. Sad, however, was the envy and heart-burning of the suitors, to behold such a monster so well versed in the anatomy of lizards, and entitled to the fair princess's hand. Truly they would have laid foul hands upon him, and eaten him up alive, could they have found an opportunity, but he kept close to his princess's side. But what was the indignation of her nurse, when expecting to behold the handsome duke, she saw this little wretch elevated in his place! Casting upon him the eye of a basilisk, though she ventured not to break out into open abuse, she muttered to herself, "Oh, villain of a hunchback! by the holy cross of our Lord, I will make thee pay dearly for this!" Then, full of the most desperate thoughts, she proceeded to consult with her unhappy charge, who also viewed him with evident reluctance, and listened but too willingly to every possible means of despatching him, in preference to receiving him as her lord. But the glorious tidings having already gone abroad, there came a number of fresh hunchbacks, flocking to the royal festival of their companion, who performed a variety of admirable tricks, to the astonishment of all the court. This added not a little to the influence of the new prince, who seemed greatly pleased at the praises which they on all sides elicited. But

to cut short the scene, which he thought began to trench a little upon his dignity, when the presumptuous hunchbacks approached him familiarly, to receive their reward, their royal brother gave each of them a kick upon their bumps, and ordered them to be taken down into the kitchen.

Now this unkind usage of his old friends was extremely grating to the gentle feelings of his princess ; she therefore gave secret orders that these very facetious hunchbacks should be invited for another day, in order to receive the due recompense of their humorous tricks. In the mean time, under various pretexts, she contrived to keep her royal consort at a distance, until the day, appointed for the return of the hunchbacks, arrived. They were directly introduced into the princess's chamber, where she opened upon their astonished eyes a variety of trunks filled with costly apparel ; but, just as she was in the act of presenting some to them, the footsteps of her crooked spouse were heard actually ascending the staircase. There was no alternative but to thrust the little crooked fellows into the trunks, which was no sooner done than the royal hunchback stepped into the chamber. All was still as death ; for had they made the least noise, they would infallibly have been hanged to satisfy the foolish jealousy of his highness, He

remained with the princess some time, which placed the lives of his trembling subjects in the utmost jeopardy, as they were already beginning to gasp for breath. Still he stayed, and stayed; and when at length, on his taking his leave, the princess hastened to open the trunks, what was her surprise and sorrow on finding that all her amusing guests were quite dead! After breathing harder and harder, they had gone into convulsions, and their feeble kicks had scarcely reached the ears of the royal spouses. Closing the trunks, however, she resolved to make the best of a bad business; and consulting with her nurse, they forthwith confided the whole affair to a faithful courtier, presenting him at the same time with a sum of money. With this he directly proceeded to purchase three large bags, exactly alike; and calling a stout porter, he gave them to him, saying, "Follow me;" and marched back, as fast as he could, straight into the palace. They first took one of the little deceased, and squeezing him till he came within the dimensions of the bag, the princess, addressing the porter, said, "Do you mark me? Carry this sack away, and throw it, just as it is, into the river. Here are ten ducats; but take heed how you open it, and when you come back you shall have twenty more." So the porter threw the burden on

his shoulder, saying, " I wish I had more such jobs as these ;" and after pitching it into the river, he hastened back as fast as he could. In the chamber he found the same identical burden lying there, which he thought he had just disposed of, the second humpback having assumed the place of the first. Testifying no little surprise, the lady said to him, " Do not be alarmed ; but truly he is a sly villain, as you see, and delights to plague people. He will be sure to come back again, if you do not throw him far enough, and sink him in the river ; this time you must take better care." Perfectly satisfied with the ducats, the man took up his burden, and again launched it into the deepest part of the river he could find, and staying to watch it fairly sink, he exclaimed in a joyful tone, " I think you are fairly gone at last ;" for the night was now setting in, and he did not much relish another journey along the banks of the river. Taking a light, however, he returned into the chamber, and beheld a third sack ready prepared for him ; and seizing it in no little anger, he bore it away. But as soon as he had made his way through the crowd, he determined, at all hazards, to know with what kind of a devil he had to deal ; and opening the bag, he found an ugly little hunchback in it. " Oh, thou cursed beast !" he cried,

“ I will try to end thee now ;” and taking out a huge knife, he severed the head from the body. Then thrusting it into the sack, filled with stones and iron, he once more committed him to the river, and made his way back to the palace. Now it so chanced, that just at the entrance he met with the royal hunchback himself, returning doubtless from some mischievous expedition, and making the best of his way to pay another visit to his beloved princess. The porter had no sooner set his eyes upon him than he exclaimed in the utmost indignation, “ Ah, villain Hunchback, are you here before me again ?” and seizing him with all the glorious strength of a porter by the beard, he bound him in a moment quite fast, and thrusting him into the sack, he said, “ Three times you have made me return, and yet you are at it again ; but we shall see who has the best of it.” In this way he carried the royal Hunchback along, who in vain asserted his title to majesty, and that he was just going on a visit to his queen, and endeavoured to bribe his treacherous subject at any price. It was all in vain : he was thrown headlong into the river, while the porter proceeded back, not without some apprehension that he should have another journey. On mounting the staircase, however, and proceeding into the chamber, he had the satisfaction of beholding his

labours completed ; for no more hunchbacks were to be seen. “ Yes, you have done,” said the princess ; “ I do not think he will come back any more now :— here, take all these ducats, and fare you well.” The porter replied, “ But he has returned a good many times though ; for I met him just now coming in at the gate ; so I bound him fast, and put him into the sack in spite of him, and then threw him again into the river. To be sure, he offered me a deal of money to let him go ; and threatened and swore, and said he was the king ; but it was all of no use: he was obliged to be drowned. So I think I have earned my wages well, by four such journeys as these.”

Upon hearing these tidings, the princess and her maids of honour were quite overjoyed ; and lavishing the most liberal favours upon the porter for his lucky blunder, they bribed him to keep the matter secret. Thus by a single blunder, the porter became a rich man ; the lady was freed from an ugly brute of a husband ; and the duke of Milesi made happy, in possessing the charms of the beautiful princess. Let the fate of the royal Hunchback be a lesson, then, for those, who are inclined, by fraudulent means, to advance themselves at the expense of others.

NOVELLA V.

IN old times, at least some ninety years ago, there lived a certain shopkeeper named Girolamo Linainolo, who was remarkable for some green beauty spots upon his visage. His shop was situated exactly opposite to that of mine host of the Bell, a favourite resort of travellers, one of whom, crossing the way, addressed him one day as follows: "Surely I saw you hanged the other day at Milan. How have you contrived to rise again from the dead?" But Girolamo denied that he had ever been hanged, and that there was any resurrection in the case. "Don't tell me so," returned the other, "for I saw you stretched out upon your bier, and I counted exactly the same number of marks upon your face, just sixteen, as you have now. The priests were singing '*In die illâ tremendâ*;' and moreover I tell you, that you have had two wives, you have such and such marks on your arm and on your side; and your second wife, who told us so, is now married again to Ambrogio da Porta Comasina, my own servant. What think you of that? do you think I should say so much, if it were not true?"

At these words, Girolamo turned very pale, exclaiming, "Alas, what did I die of then? I was never hanged." "Well, if you do not like to call it so, I am sure you died very suddenly; thousands can bear witness to that, and you ought still to be dead; take a looking glass, look at yourself, and you will find how it is." Trembling in every limb, the poor shopkeeper stole a hasty glance at the glass, and beholding himself looking so like a corpse, without further disputing the truth of what was said, he wrapped his mantle about him, and, drawing his hat over his eyes, made the best of his way towards Cestello, where he had a house. By the way he tried to console himself, saying, "At all events, there will be no more trouble in this world for me; no more 'Buy, buy, please to buy;' 'Sell, sell;' 'Please to try this, Signor,' and, 'Run, you rascal boy, with these to the gentleman.' No, my shop must be shut up; there is an end of all this now." So, convinced that he had departed this life long ago, as it had been so clearly demonstrated by the traveller, he immediately pulled his clothes off, and laid himself out the moment he reached home. Placed in his winding sheet upon a large table, with a taper burning, and a cross at his head, with two more blessed lights, which he had borrowed for the purpose, burning at his feet, he pa-

tiently awaited his interment. His wife coming in, and seeing him thus ready prepared for his funeral, far from shewing the least inclination to disturb him, sounded the alarm, and affected to weep over her dear husband's death. Of course no one pretended to dispute it, and it was determined that our hero should be interred in all due form. Fortunately, however, two of his friends had witnessed his interview with the traveller, of whom one agreed to take the care of his shop, while the other followed him, to observe the result. Finding he was so intent upon being buried, they resolved to humour him, and prepared him a vault in San Lorenzo, where they actually interred him. But, at the same time, they had the kindness to furnish it also with a table of provisions, and two other persons were interred alive, to keep him company and take care of him. After enjoying a good sleep, our hero opened his eyes in his new abode, and saw a table full of refreshments, with two guests seated there enjoying themselves. Gazing round him some time as he lay there in a state of suspense, he at length began to feel extremely hungry, and, addressing himself to the guests, said, "Do the dead eat then?" They replied, "Yes, indeed they do, Signor!" Upon which Girolamo immediately rose and joined them, doing ample jus-

tice to the good things he found there. "What shall we do next?" he inquired, when they had concluded their feast. "Why, I think we had better go home," replied one of the others; "let us think of looking after our business according to the Lord's commandment; for those who will not work shall not eat, you know." "Blessed be the name of the Lord," cried Girolamo, "if I can only contrive to accomplish my resurrection, for the second time, I shall be truly delighted." "Come, then," said the other, "I dare say it may be done, if you will lend a hand here;" and, so saying, all the three put their shoulders to the task, and at last removing the covering of the vault, they walked quietly home together. But though our hero afterwards committed a thousand follies and extravagancies, to the no small entertainment of the neighbourhood, he had never again the good luck to rise from the dead. The next time of his disappearance, which was caused by a cruel malady, he was no longer so fortunate. It was by far the most serious decease of the three, and having already continued about ninety years, he may possibly during that time have got the megrims out of his brain.

NOVELLA VI.

INSCRIBED TO MESSER TIBERIO PANDOLFO.

IN truth, my dear Messer Tiberio, I have been almost obliged to have a new pair of braces made for me ; so outrageously have I laughed at a certain Magnifico, by name Benetto da Francolino, generally speaking, a kind of friend of ours. Tell me whether I had not reason, as soon as you have perused the following notorious instance of his folly, one which the king of the fools himself might adopt as the future model of all his proceedings. Yet I cannot afford to begin at the beginning of his foolery, or to tell you how he succeeded to his hereditary nonsense ; how he boasts his nobility to the winds for want of other listeners ; how he keeps a journal and ledger of the miraculous things he does every day, and last, but not least, how he glories in vaunting himself above all the other lords of the creation.

A certain legate of his Holiness, in Venice, was in the habit of familiar intercourse with this windy patrician, for the very sufficient reason, that he had, a long time ago, been enlisted in the service of his most reverend patrons at Rome. Now, *in illo tem-*

pore, about the same time, I say, came his very Holiness himself, to hold a papal interview with the Duke of Ferrara, in the noble state of Lombardy. His residence was engaged for him, the houses were marked with chalk, and all the monasteries of the city were almost bursting with pious people, who, longing to have a sight of the Pope, like good children put every thing in order, at a few days warning, to receive their holy father. The good legate had not intended to be present at this solemn proceeding; but somehow a whim took him, when he heard of the duke's grand preparations to receive his master, to have a servant's share in them. Besides, he was always on the look out for occasions in which to do honor to the Holy See, and to his friends and patrons, for his faith in whom "he was always ready to give a reason." In this humour, he observed to his friend Benetto: "Now, if I thought I could obtain any lodging in Ferrara, I would instantly spur away, and arrive in time to make my solemn entry along with his Holiness." "Would you so?" cried his vain-glorious companion; "why did not you mention this before? for I do assure you, most reverend Father in God, I have a palace there, which is quite at your service." "Indeed," returned the legate, "I had no idea of that; but, such being the case, I shall con-

sider myself extremely fortunate." "Then I hope," said this prince of liars, "that your excellency will not scruple to honour my palace with your presence, for there is only one gentleman who has now apartments in it; but I have expressly reserved for my own use the rooms on the ground floor. You will also find, I trust, a good sample of wine, which I beg you will not spare." "But perhaps," said the legate, "your lodger may be some distinguished prelate—some friend of yours, who may be occupying the whole suite of rooms." Our magnificent boaster, with an air of well affected surprise, answered, "He dare as soon eat his fingers off, as occupy a square foot of deal board, without my permission: for I assure you, were he to come into my rooms below, I should very quickly eject him out of those above stairs, and he knows that well."

Now who would have believed that a pope's legate could be so far deceived by his supreme effrontery of face, as to give credit to this boasting beast of an impostor? Yet such was the fact; for he made preparations to set out, packing up his pious paraphernalia, hiring his gondolas for his domestics, and then setting off post at great expense and inconvenience to Francolino; and thence, proceeding by forced stages, they shortly arrived at Ferrara. Dur-

ing the way, the legate's false friend had kept up a continued volley of flattery and folly, declaring that it appeared to him a thousand years until he had the pleasure of beholding a pope's nuncio in his palace, and of honouring him to the utmost stretch of his great authority in Ferrara. In return the legate thanked him, promising to find an occasion to shew his gratitude. So far, however, from possessing a palace, this vile Benedetto Franchini was not even worth a common stall in Ferrara, commanding just as much property and influence there as I do myself. He had, however, contrived to worm himself into the favour of a gentleman, whose son, a young man of about thirty, having acquired great influence over him, had the full command of his father's house in town; the identical palace fixed upon by our hero. On this occasion the young gentleman had been at the trouble of furnishing it in the best style for the reception of some Venetian ladies and their friends, whose arrival he was expecting with the utmost joy and ardour. Four of his servants were in waiting on the lower floor, prepared to receive his visitors; while he himself went to take a ride in the city. The domestics were accordingly on the watch, as good servants ought to be, on the tiptoe of expectation. When, hark the sound of wheels! a grand equipage stopped at

the door, and outstepped our two gentlemen, assisted by their retinue, from their carriage ; but, to the surprise and disappointment of our lacqueys, always a gallant race of men, they were accompanied by no ladies. What could be the meaning of this ? Fortune, however too soon unravelled the mystery, to the confusion of our unlucky and vain-glorious hero. She availed herself of this occasion, to proclaim him the King of Fools, as far as his name and exploits extended. But, in the mean time, he advanced to welcome his reverend friend, on arriving at his palace, inquiring what he thought of it, whether the rooms were such as he liked, and suited to his convenience ? “ Truly it is a noble palace,” exclaimed the legate, as he paced the magnificent suite of rooms, “ and I thank you.” “ Such as it is,” returned his false host, “ it is quite at your excellency’s service ; only take the trouble of ordering every thing, just as if you were in your own house.” Then proceeding towards the door to watch the arrival of the real master, he said within himself, “ Now, what shall I say when this troublesome fellow comes ? I will tell him it is by the duke’s express orders that we have taken possession here, and that he must seek out other lodgings as long as the festival lasts. Yes, I think that will do !” Just as he had resolved upon this modest proposal, about the hour of

supper, there came riding up the young lord of the mansion, who, the moment he saw the equipages at the door, with a lover's eagerness gave spurs to his horse, wondering how the ladies could have escaped him, and, thinking every moment an age, until he had saluted his love. He threw himself from his horse, and bounded at a single step into the house, when, instead of the fair girl, he encountered our hero on the threshold, who with the utmost effrontery offered him his hand, saying, "How rejoiced I am to see you here; I am a particular friend of your father's, who is under some obligation to me. I have, therefore, made free to bring hither the pope's ambassador at Venice, a very distinguished prelate, whose patronage you may thus enjoy. I have only, however, put him into possession of these four apartments on the lower floor for a few days; and if you please, I will assist you in finding another abode, while we inform your intended guests that we act by the duke's orders, and whatever are his excellency's commands, we must take them patiently."

On hearing this presumptuous blockhead's demands, the young lover, greatly shocked at his disappointment, had yet sufficient sense to see through the trick, and resolved rather to perish than to break his engagement to the friends of his beloved. Had it

even been the pope, or the emperor, he could not have controlled his passion, as he exclaimed : “ Away, thou villain, rogue, impostor, beast as thou art ! Tell me not of the pope, or the pope’s ambassador ; the house is mine, sir ; these apartments are intended for two young ladies, and other noble Venetians, and for no one else ; so quick, begone, you wretch ! Go, or be kicked out, whichever you like best.” Hearing high words, the legate made his appearance, dreading lest any thing might happen to his honourable friend and worthy host, Franchino, and he was followed by all the domestics. As soon as our young lover set his eyes upon the good bishop in his canonicals, he addressed him as follows : “ I am concerned that your lordship should have been made the dupe of this worthless fellow’s base and cowardly imposture, in thus bringing you to a stranger’s residence. But this mansion is my father’s, and has already been offered to a number of Venetian ladies and gentlemen, whom I am every moment expecting to see. Had I been aware, however, of the honour intended me, there is no one I should have been more proud to accommodate than yourself, and I trust you will consent to remain here for the evening. But not so this prince of impostors, for he must decamp ; and I will take upon me to provide your excellency with a suitable residence tomorrow.”

The illustrious prelate endeavoured to express how greatly he was shocked at what had occurred, but was hardly able to open his mouth, so much had he been taken by surprise. “ Pardon me, my dear young signor ; upon my word, it is the most unlucky, the strangest thing I ever knew ; and I do assure you, young man, as I value his Holiness’s blessing, that I should not have stirred out of Venice, much less have got into such a dreadful bustle as there is in Ferrara, had not this child of Satan assured me before he set out that the palace was his own, and that every thing was at my disposal. But, truly, I will find my way back again to-night, before you shall have the least trouble on my account,” and, saying this, he turned round very fiercely upon his deceitful friend, who, in dread of receiving his immediate malediction, took to his heels and disappeared.

The young lover, being as good as his word, and wishing to get his Holiness’s nuncio quietly out of the way, went and took some rooms for him in a neighbouring convent, where he was duly received and honoured by the whole fraternity. From this incident, the good bishop and the young lover were led into a very agreeable acquaintance, which they owed entirely to the absurd impertinence of the eminent ass who had brought them together, and whom they re-

solved to seize an occasion of requiting, in such a way, as to give him no inclination to repeat similar experiments. It is pleasant to see a conceited block-head thus taken in his own snares, and I have always a singular satisfaction in putting him upon record, by way of amusement as well as example.

NOVELLA XI.

I WAS acquainted, not very long ago, with two cavaliers, who, as sometimes will happen, had imbibed the bitterest enmity to each other, but whose names I do not think it prudent here to disclose. It will be enough to state that the one was of a noble and fearless character, and the other of as vile and treacherous a disposition. Conceiving himself injured by the former, yet not venturing to challenge him to single combat, or to clear up his honour face to face, the coward employed himself in devising some other means of revenging the slight he imagined he had received. Having been frequently foiled and worsted in the joust, where his adversary had greatly distinguished himself, as well as in many engagements in which he had vanquished his enemies hand to hand, and intitled himself to rank among the heroes of his time, his cowardly foe, jealous of his fame, let no occasion escape of attempting to carry him off by treachery. Though aware of the inveterate malice entertained against him, his more noble-minded enemy, scorning to notice it, refused to take any precautions to ward off the danger, believing that if he

really felt himself aggrieved, he would adopt the usual course of inviting him into the open field. In this supposition he held himself on the alert, well furnished with horse and arms, and resolved to evince the same valour which he had shown on former occasions.

But the consequences to himself were infinitely more fatal than he could have apprehended; for his unworthy opponent, learning that he was about to take a journey from Rome to Naples, had the baseness, impelled by jealousy and revenge, to lie in wait for him, accompanied by forty or fifty ruffians, in a solitary part of the road. There, when the brave cavalier made his appearance, accompanied only by a few friends and attendants, he suddenly found himself surrounded by a band of armed banditti, led by his enemy, to whom he immediately addressed himself with the confidence of one who was incapable of suspecting the meditated treachery, while his followers, alarmed at the disproportionate numbers, drew in their horses' heads, awaiting with anxiety the result. The false traitor, riding up to his brave enemy, called upon him to yield, or that he was a dead man; to which he replied by clapping his hand upon his sword, but he was soon overpowered by numbers, and disarmed. "You are now in my

power," exclaimed his exulting and cowardly foe; "and if you do not here consent to what I shall propose, I will despatch you upon the spot, along with all your friends. But if you accede to my proposal, you shall all go free." "Let me hear what it is you require," said the other. "It is this: that you subscribe this paper with your own hand; nothing more," said the villain, "I assure you." Now the writing was to the following tenor: "I do hereby certify and make known, of my own free and uninfluenced will, that all the feats of arms which I have hitherto achieved, whether in jousts and tournaments, single battle, or in the field, were performed by aid of diabolical arts and enchantments, and in no way by my own valour. No one need be surprised at this, who reflects upon the thousand infernal acts daily brought about at the instigation of the devil. I do, moreover, here make confession that I am a most disloyal traitor, a heretic, and an atheist; in proof whereof, I do under my own hand, and in the presence of the following witnesses, subscribe my name to the above true and faithful declaration."

To this vile forgery the unhappy cavalier, as well to save the lives of his friends as his own, was induced, in a fatal moment, to subscribe his name, in the be-

lief that the vengeance of his implacable foe would thus be satisfied. For could he have believed it possible that further treachery was intended against him, he would have died, along with his friends, a thousand deaths, sooner than have consented to such an act of dishonour, without the hope of ever clearing his fame. But the moment this unmanly villain had obtained the signature of his name, turning towards the unfortunate gentleman, he said : “ It would not have half satiated my vengeance, to have deprived you of your life, for I have long hated you, and I have now succeeded in robbing you of your life, your honour, and your soul itself.” Then, while offering up the most piteous prayers for mercy, he basely assassinated the wretched cavalier upon the spot ; and, gluttled with vengeance and blood, afterwards permitted the rest of the party to retire uninjured, who were the means of handing down his infamy to the execrations of the world.

NOVELLA XII.

THERE has lately risen up, in a place on the confines of Lombardy, a new saint, now ready to be added to the calendar. Having abandoned the profession of curing bodies, in which his conscience began to reproach him with having despatched nearly the whole list of his patients to another world, he undertook the more harmless cure of souls, induced by the same motive of enriching himself at the expense of others. For his cloak of religion, then, he assumed a lion's skin, in which he came to Piacenza, entitling his order—THE APOSTOLIC RULE OF THE FOUR EVANGELISTS, IN THE HABIT OF THE FIRST HERMIT, ST. PAUL.

This new invention he supported by a thousand other spiritual fabrications of the same kind, studying the most successful impostures of his predecessors, and persuading the good people, like a rogue as he was, to erect him a convent for his new disorder of monks, quite worthy of their great superior, whose creed was principally to lighten the pockets of their congregation, and of simple wayfaring travellers, by

virtue of the miracles and relics which they exhibited to view.

Thus, in a short time, from a death-dealing doctor he became a little spiritual despot, reconciling it better to his conscience to tyrannize over the minds, than to torture the bodies, of his patients ; until fortune, who can ill support the sight even of a good man in prosperity, lent him a few such smart kicks, in the exercise of his new functions, from one who had detected his imposture, as to lead him to conclude he had gone somewhat too far, though he found it too late to retrace his steps. In short, after having shorn his flock as close as any shepherd well could, he was himself overreached, exposed, and compelled to take to flight, by some superior master in the same art, whose subtlety exceeded even his own. For though he fought hard to maintain his spiritual government, and again to recover his lost ground, it was all in vain ; no new relics, no fresh miracles could avail him ; the charm of his reputation was flown, and a still more successful candidate was now elected to the throne.

Under these circumstances he took to an ambulatory mode of warfare, proceeding from monastery to monastery, husbanding his relics and miracles in a most surprising manner, and exhibiting them only

as necessity seemed to require. In the course of these his travels, the last and greatest of his impostures is well deserving of record, even among those preserved in the catalogue of San Ciappelletto. It happened that in journeying one day towards Nizza, he was taken seriously unwell ; so much so as to be obliged to seek refuge in a neighbouring convent, belonging to the friars of I know not what disorder, where he was glad to be able to repose. Here, as long as he had money enough to make himself comfortable, his residence was highly agreeable to the holy fathers, although the fame of his wicked impostures had reached the place before him ; but the moment his resources began to fail, there was a marked change for the worse in their conduct towards our San Giovanni. Their whispers became louder, they began to consult the reputation of their monastery, and the patient could scarcely rest in his bed, for their importunities to get rid of him and to send him to the hospital ; for as to themselves, they declared that they were heartily tired of him. In this way they went on, day after day, worse and worse, as well as the patient, who, by his condition, seemed resolved to have the benefit of dying in their hands. There was, indeed, only about another hour's life in him, when they came to the resolution of removing

him ; upon which, in order better to defeat their plan, he died in half an hour, congratulating himself that he had thus succeeded in laying his bones with them, like a pious monk, even against their will. The whole fraternity, not a little perplexed how to act, and desirous of obviating the scandal which might attach to them, of having received so notorious a delinquent under their protection, resolved to put the best face they could upon the matter, to give him all due funereal honours, in a public and pompous display, to pronounce an oration, and clear his memory from the vile imputations cast upon it ; and if all this proved not enough to absolve them in the eyes of the people, to canonize him by the name of "San Giovanni the younger," without delay. For this purpose, the most specious and oratorical monk of the brotherhood was fixed upon to deliver the oration, who went through the whole service with so much credit both to himself and to the deceased saint, that the people, not satisfied with giving mere empty applauses, immediately began a collection, beyond the expectation of the most sanguine of the order. Our hero then was unanimously made a saint, in a style that would have excited the envy of his predecessor, San Ciappelletto, and proceeded to work various miracles accordingly.

But for my own part, I do not give the least faith to these saints who excite the wonder and applause of the vulgar, confining it only to such as are duly approved and beatified by the holy church of the faithful at Rome.

NOVELLA XIV.

Two knights of Portugal, both of whom are probably still in existence, entertaining a mortal enmity towards each other, were incessantly occupied in studying the surest means of taking revenge. The one, however, who first conceived himself injured, surpassed his adversary in the vigilance with which he watched every occasion of carrying his designs into execution. This ferocious disposition was further nurtured by the circumstance of his inability, either in force or courage, successfully to contend with his enemy, which, while it compelled him to stifle the expression of his hatred, led him to reflect upon every secret method of annoying him in his power. Though formerly of noble and virtuous dispositions, this unhappy feud had so far disordered his better feelings and his judgment, as to induce him to commit one of the most atrocious actions recorded in history. He watched his opportunity of surprising and assassinating both the father and brother of his nobler foe, intelligence of which fact having reached the court, a proclamation was forthwith issued by the king, forbidding

his subjects, under the severest penalties, to harbour the author of so foul a crime, while officers were despatched on all sides in pursuit of him.

After perpetrating the deed, the assassin, hearing the proclamation everywhere bruited in his ears, and believing it impossible long to elude the vigilance of his pursuers, torn at the same time by the agonies of remorse and guilt, came to a resolution rather of dying by the hand of him whom he had so deeply injured, than awaiting the more tardy and ignominious course of justice. For, having satiated his revenge, the idea of what he had once been, and of his lost fame and honour, rushed with an overwhelming sense of despair across his mind ; and he felt a dark and fearful satisfaction in yielding himself up to the sword of his deeply injured adversary. With this view he secretly issued from his retreat, under cover of the night, and having before day-break reached the residence of him whom he deemed his executioner, he presented himself in his astonished presence with the fatal poniard in his hand, kneeling and baring his bosom as he offered it to the grasp of his foe.

Impelled by a sudden feeling of revenge, and viewing the assassin in his power, the cavalier was in the act of plunging the steel into his breast, but restraining his passion, and conceiving it dishonourable

to take so inglorious an advantage, he flung it from him, and turned his face away. At length commanding his emotion, he declared that he would never stain his hands with the blood of a defenceless man, much less of an unarmed knight, be his offences what they would ; and with singular greatness and generosity of soul, proceeded to assure the assassin of his safety, as long as he remained with him. Witnessing the terrors of remorse and guilt which seemed to sting him to the quick, and leaving his further punishment to heaven, his generous foe attended him the ensuing night on horseback, beyond the confines of the kingdom. Yet, on his return, unable to forget the sad source of his resentment, he hastened to the court of Portugal, and on obtaining an audience of his majesty, said that he had heard of his enemy's escape from the country, and that he was now probably beyond the reach of justice, glorying in his iniquity. It was therefore incumbent upon him to adopt some other means of redressing the wrongs he had suffered, and his majesty would oblige him by granting a safe conduct to his foe, to re-enter the kingdom, so that he might meet him in single battle. " There is only one condition," continued the knight, " I would beseech your majesty to grant ; that if I should be so unfortunate as to fall beneath his arm, your ma-

jesty will please to absolve him from all his offences, and permit him to go free ; and if, as I firmly trust, I should come off victorious, that his fate shall rest in my hands." The king, with some difficulty, being prevailed upon to grant these terms, the noble cavalier immediately despatched messengers, bearing at once a safe conduct, and a public defiance to his enemy to meet him in the field, and yield him satisfaction in single combat, according to the laws of honour, before the king and court. Willing to afford his enemy the revenge he sought, the assassin, to the astonishment of the people, made his appearance on the appointed day in the lists, clothed in complete armour, and accepted the challenge proposed. On the heralds sounding a charge, they both engaged with apparently equal fury ; but the injured knight shortly wounded his antagonist severely in several places, and stretched him on the field weltering in his blood. Instead, however, of despatching him, as every one expected, on the spot, he raised him up, and calling for surgical assistance, had him conveyed to a place of safety. His wounds proving not to be mortal, the noble cavalier on his recovery accompanied him into the presence of the king, and declared publicly before the whole court, that he granted him his liberty and his life, entreating at the same

time the royal pardon for him, and permission to reside in any part of his majesty's dominions.

In admiration of his unequalled magnanimity, the king readily conceded what he wished; while the unhappy object of their favour, overwhelmed with feelings of remorse and shame, humbled himself before his generous conqueror, and ever afterwards evinced sentiments of the utmost gratitude and respect to the noble cavalier, being at once the most faithful friend and follower he ever had.

NOVELLA XXII.

THERE was a certain Greek gentleman, who, with immense wealth, possessed an extremely sociable disposition, which latter quality, however, did not prevent his entertaining great aversion for every kind of scandal and buffoonery. During the summer season he usually kept open house, and invited all the most estimable characters he could meet with in the vicinity, to dine with him. Now it so happened, that having occasion one day to give a splendid feast in his suite of lower rooms, there was introduced to his table among others a notorious wit and buffoon of the very stamp to which he had taken such an antipathy. Even before dinner was announced, he began to broach his budget of news and lies, and wicked witticisms, in which he was encouraged by the applause of too many of the guests. Perceiving the low turn the conversation was taking, the shrewd and accomplished host, catching his eye, affected at first to take his tricks and witticisms all in good part, observing, "How I love a humorous man! you are heartily welcome, signor; it is an age since I have met with your equal. If I thought that exalting you to the head of the table could add the least jot to your humour, by

Jove, you should do the honours of the house for me." Then pointing to the grand repast that lay spread out before them, he insisted upon his first tasting a precious kind of wine before sitting down to table, adding, with a gay and joyous aspect, " You know it has ever been our custom, gentlemen, previous to arranging our places here, to take precedence according to our respective agility. First of all, we must try which can leap the highest over a handkerchief; secondly, which can jump the furthest, making three essays each. Whoever leaps the highest, let him have the second place; but whoever jumps the farthest, surely he will be entitled to the first. Now let me try whether I cannot still preserve my place at the head of my own table;" and bounding up three times to a prodigious height, our alert Greek made the rest of the company almost despair. He begged the buffoon, by way of compliment, to follow him next, and then the other guests; but their efforts to equal him were vain. " Now then," cried the count, " we shall see who will have the first place;" and, taking a start, he made a most astonishing hop, skip, and a jump, the length of the whole room. In fact he went half-way through the door, while murmurs of applause followed the exploit. Our witty gentleman, intent upon rivalling the count, and securing the first place at table, summoned all his

strength, and with the third leap succeeded in beating his adversary by at least two feet. When the wily Greek saw that he had jumped himself fairly out of the door, he instantly turned the key upon him, shutting in the other guests and himself, and cried out in a triumphant tone: "Go, for you are beneath our notice; beaten hollow, all to nothing! Let us sit down!" a proposal to which the other guests unanimously assented. The wit then, for the first time in his life, perhaps, perceived that he had been outwitted; he heard the torrent of laughter bursting from the room, and sought a dinner for that day elsewhere. The good host observing that they were well rid of such a scandalous, backbiting wretch, who only went about hatching mischief, began to entertain his company, like a true gentleman as he was, and for once feasted with closed instead of open doors, a circumstance, however, which seldom occurred. Oh, that others would take example by him, instead of fostering with their smiles, a set of half starved ragamuffin wits and sycophants, who repay such kindness by poisoning the real pleasure, and destroying the proprieties of decent and respectable tables, uttering a thousand falsehoods and defamations, which not unfrequently end in heart-burnings, duels, and death itself!

NOVELLA XXX.

Two young courtiers once laid a plot together to carry off a beautiful young girl from her mother's protection ; one of whom, having already engaged her affections, succeeded, under the most solemn promises of marriage, in seducing her from the path of duty. Though of humble origin, she was as intelligent and accomplished as she was beautiful, yet her youth and inexperience, united to the pleadings of affection, at length betrayed her to her ruin. She nevertheless placed such unbounded confidence in her lover's honour, and such was the ascendancy he acquired over her, that she was prevailed upon, when the ardour of his love had passed away, to resume her former dress, and consent to return to her mother's home, in the belief that on the appointed day he would come and claim her hand in marriage. In this way she was, late one evening, borne by these bad friends to her former dwelling, one of them pretending to bind himself for the fulfilment of the other's engagements. They left her a little money, and took their leave of their weeping victim, repeating their false promises of a speedy return.

Here her unhappy situation could not long be concealed from her mother, whose mingled grief and passion on learning the fatal truth, were such as only a mother can fully appreciate, but which it is impossible to convey in words. Drowned in tears of anguish, her daughter in vain attempted to inspire her with the hopes she herself felt, to excuse the conduct and assert the honourable intentions of her lover. The mother soon saw the full extent of her poor girl's misfortune, the long tissue of premeditated cruelty and deceit to which she had fallen a prey; and the hand which had been suddenly raised, as if to strike her to the earth, only clasped her neck in the fulness of maternal sorrow and affection. But their unhappiness did not rest here; the tongue of scandal soon became busy with their good name, which had lately ranked among the best and purest, and the mother, goaded with redoubled anguish, now insisted upon their appealing to the Duke Alexander for redress, not the least distinguished among the Medici for his love of justice throughout Florence. With patient attention the duke listened to her unhappy story, and told her to wipe away her tears, for that, as far as depended upon him, she should no longer have occasion to weep. Then taking her mother aside, he said, "I wish you to be civil to these gentle-

men: invite them to your house; let your daughter entertain them like other company, and contrive that they shall sup together. Moreover, observe my commands in every thing I shall direct, and despair not, for we will secure the future happiness of your daughter. But breathe not a word of what I say to you; if you have the weakness, like most women, to talk of your own affairs, and let my name appear in this, ill betide the fortunes of your family, for you will forfeit my favour, and the dowry which it is my intention to bestow upon your daughter, and remain in greater disgrace than before. Be secret, therefore, and let me hear from you on the occasion I have mentioned."

In obedience to the duke's wishes, the lady put the whole affair into train; and one day as the fair girl sat binding her hair upon the sunny side of a gentle hill, lying beyond her flower garden, she perceived the two cavaliers approaching her. They saw, and accosted her, while her mother received them with cheerful looks at the door, and inviting them in, proceeded to regale them in the best style she could. In the mean time she informed the duke of their arrival, who, accompanied by a few select officers, directly set off, and joined the lady at her house. Soon after alighting, he took occasion to entreat the lady

to shew him through her mansion. This she was apparently compelled to do ; and when they approached the apartment where the party were supping together, she affected to turn his excellency aside, observing aloud, "There is nothing further worthy of your excellency's notice ; a mere lumber room."—"But I will see it, nevertheless," interrupted his grace, "I will see it ;" and suddenly opening the door, he beheld his two courtiers, with the lovely girl seated between them, enjoying themselves in the best style, and imagining, in their conceit, that they were now equally acceptable to both the ladies of the house. "Good night, my lords," cried the duke, "I wish you joy ; you seem extremely comfortable here." They both directly rose in the utmost confusion at the sight of the duke, while the timid girl, unable to contend with her feelings, burst into a flood of tears. "Weep not," said the duke to her, in a gentle voice, "good girls are always to be found at home ; they do not run after courtiers to other people's houses ; you confer honour upon your household by staying where you are." Though there was a tone of irony in this, followed by some severe yet well meant reflections and advice, he mingled with them so much gentleness and pity, that she thanked him even in her tears. He then declared that he had come for the sole purpose of

bestowing her hand in marriage, and of conferring on her a dowry of five hundred crowns. Turning next towards one of his first officers, he continued, "Would you deign to accept this gentleman as your husband? Does he please you?" Drooping her fair head, unable for some minutes to reply, she could only at length sob out: "No, no husband, but he who promised to take me as his wedded wife."—"What," said the duke, "are you then already married?"—"This, my lord, is the gentleman who gave me his vows and swore to make me his wife." The duke then turning round upon the courtier, with a noble and determined air, "If this be the truth," he continued, "how happens it that I find the lady in this house, and in company with this other gentleman at table? Wherefore does she not sit at your table? What am I to think of this?"—"He is my friend," said the guilty courtier, "he will witness for me"—but he stammered out only some unmeaning words, and stood covered with confusion as the duke proceeded; "And had you both forgotten that there was yet such a governor as Alexander de' Medici alive? that there was yet justice in the land? Speak, fair lady; which of these gentlemen do you fix upon as your lawful husband?"—"No other, so please your excellency," she replied, "but he who

has often promised to make me his.”—“It is enough,” continued the duke, “what you ask is only just; and to shew you that justice is one of the virtues that I love, receive this ring, signor, and espouse the young woman before my eyes. And you,” he observed, addressing the courtier’s companion, “will be kind enough to add to the lady’s dowry, the sum of five hundred crowns, the same amount that I have myself given her.” Then, having been witness to the marriage, he departed with the whole of his train, including the bridegroom’s false friend, leaving the happy young bride and her husband in their mother’s house.

Nobels of Sebastiano Crizzo.

SEBASTIANO ERIZZO.

THIS writer was a Venetian gentleman and a senator, more distinguished, perhaps, for his antiquarian researches, and as the founder of the present system of studying ancient medals, than for his superior excellence as a novelist. A few stories, however, rather of an historical than an imaginary cast, are to be met with in his work of the *Sei Giornate*,* that may possess sufficient attractions for the genuine lovers of fiction. It made its first appearance under the auspices of the once celebrated critic Lodovico Dolce, to whom the author presented the MS., from which it was put forth at Venice.† Sebastiano was born on the 19th of June, 1525, and was the son of Antonio Erizzo, a distinguished senator, by a daughter of the Cavaliero Contarini. He pursued his studies in Greek and Roman literature at Padua, and afterwards devoted his whole attention to

* Le Sei Giornate di Messer Sebastiano Erizzo, date in luce da Messer Lodovico Dolce, all' Illustrissimo Signore Federico Gonzaga, Marchese di Gazuolo. *Venezia*, Gio. Varisco e compagni: 1567.

† Dolce's Dedicatory Epistle dated Venice, June 15, 1567.

philosophy, in which, if we are to give credit to Dolce, he made a great proficiency, as his numerous Moral Tales, which he very properly so called, to distinguish them from the class of *Novelle*, sufficiently testify. In his commendations, however, both of their style and character, his friend Dolce would appear to have departed somewhat from his usual path as a critic, to enter upon the pleasanter duty of the panegyrist.

He, no doubt very conscientiously, announces, "that he should be defrauding the reader of much valuable moral improvement, and the author of his just fame, were he to deprive the world of the labours of so learned and distinguished a youth." But whatever allowance we ought to make for the praises bestowed upon a young acquaintance, by a critic to whom he presented his work, such is its remaining merit, as to induce the translator to present a few specimens of a production, which Dolce declares to be "in every point deserving of the very highest applause."

Erizzo bore the reputation of a good poet, as well as of a novelist, antiquary, and philosopher. He was entrusted with many important commissions by his country; sat in the Council of Ten; and died at the age of sixty, in Venice. Honourable mention is made of him by Crescimbeni and other literary historians.

SEBASTIANO ERIZZO.

NOVELLA XXV.

I RECOLLECT having once heard a Spanish gentleman, who had resided some time at the court of Portugal, relate a quarrel which took place there between a master of the king's bed-chamber, and one of the other courtiers. The former, whose name was Giovanni, believing himself slighted by his enemy, resolved to let no opportunity escape him of effecting a bitter revenge. And to such a length did his animosity proceed, that smarting under his imaginary disgrace, he contrived to surprise the other, sword in hand, and assassinate him while walking, in open day, a few miles out of the city of Lisbon. Having committed the act, he instantly fled beyond the confines of the kingdom, seeking shelter at Vilvao, in Biscay, his native place. The king, being greatly grieved to hear of the sudden and unhappy death of a courtier, whom he had long esteemed both for his pleasing manners and for his prowess in the field, commanded the strictest inquiries to be

instituted. Finding that Giovanni no longer made his appearance, no one hearing tidings of him, and the particulars of the previous quarrel being publicly known, his majesty was at no loss how to account for the assassination, which was soon after indeed ascertained to have been perpetrated by the hand of Giovanni. A heavy price was therefore imposed, by royal order, upon the criminal's head, as a reward to whomsoever would deliver him up, either dead or alive, into the hands of justice.

Now as soon as Don Pietro, steward of the royal household, heard the tenor of the proclamation, though he had formerly been greatly indebted, and even owed his life, to Giovanni, who had cleared him from some unjust accusations, for which he would otherwise have suffered; yet, unmindful of all the past kindness and obligations which he had received, and instigated by the amount of the reward, he was ungenerous enough to use every means of discovering his former friend's retreat. Accidentally hearing from an acquaintance, travelling from Biscay, that Giovanni had there sought refuge, he carefully concealed these tidings from the rest of the court; but took occasion in an audience with the king to acquaint him that he had at length discovered the place of his retreat; intimating that it would not be long before

he should present his majesty with the criminal's head. After receiving, therefore, full assurance of the promised reward, Pietro, being well armed and mounted, departed the next morning with all speed towards Biscay, and arriving within a few days at Vilvao, he secretly proceeded to discover traces of Giovanni. When he had succeeded in this object, he next took some apartments near his residence, where he determined to await a favourable occasion of carrying his nefarious project into execution. Unhappily for the object of his treachery, this was too soon afforded, Giovanni being engaged to go as far as the port of San Sebastian, where he was to await the arrival of one of his brothers returning from a long voyage. The insidious Pietro observed the preparations for his departure, and suspecting that he was about to leave the city, resolved to keep him company, the better to effect his design. Watching the hour when he set out, shortly afterwards the traitor himself secretly took horse, and following some part of the way at a convenient distance, he at length perceived him approaching the foot of a high mountain. In a few moments he was at his side; and turning suddenly upon him, he seized the reins of Giovanni's horse, accosting him at the same time with a fierce and threatening aspect: "Stand, villain,

traitor as thou art, and yield me, as, in spite of thee, thou shalt, thy coward life! Lo, thou art taken in the same snares which thou didst most maliciously and traitorously prepare for one of the noblest knights of Portugal; but thou shalt no longer live to boast thee of that vile and savage deed!" The wretched Giovanni hearing these words, while he recognized the features of his friend Pietro, with trembling and conscience-smitten voice, thus replied: "I know not, O Pietro, whether I ought to yield credit to my senses, and whether it can be really you whom I see before me, whose voice I hear, and whose hand I thus clasp in mine. An unhappy man am I, if you be no longer the same friend whom I once knew at the court of our monarch! Do I say friend? nay, my most dear and intimate companion, in whose love and honour I ever reposed the utmost trust: and more yet, whose very life I saved from the malice of enemies and the indignation of the king. Is it then, with such a countenance, with such words,—nay, look not thus fiercely on me,—that you repay all the favours I conferred upon you? Say, did you not once promise, in the fulness of your heart, grateful for the life you had received, to watch ever faithfully and fondly over mine? Could I even have dreamed that I had need to guard my bosom from the secret dag-

ger of one who, indebted to me for his life, had sworn to shield me from every harm? When did I in thought or word, since that time, offend you, that I should receive so bitter a recompense for all my love? I know not, unless you resent my having rescued you from an ignominious death. Yet common humanity, to say nothing of reason and gratitude, should lead you to take compassion on me, on my young wife, and infant boy, and not to think of depriving them of their only protector, in so savage a way. If you have a father, Pietro, then think of mine, whose sole support I am: he is bent down with grief and age; come with me, and restore me to him: let him not live to hear that you have cut me off in the summer of my days. Besides, I am going far, very far, to see one of my brothers, whom I had long wept as dead. He is but just arrived, and you will not refuse to let me behold him before I die. Nay, do not strike me: I am unarmed; but put yourself for a moment in my place, and then act as you would yourself be treated. Grant but my life, and my whole fortune shall be at your disposal. What gain, what triumph can be yours, to slay me thus unarmed? You say it was thus I slew my enemy; but he was not my friend, and by repeated insults he provoked his fate. He too would have

done the like by me, had not just heaven disposed it otherwise, and favoured the righteous cause. Venture not, therefore, to imbrue your hands in innocent blood,—nay, worse,—in the blood of your friend and benefactor, drawing down upon yourself the malediction of heaven and of mankind.” Here he ceased ; but the savage and avaricious Pietro, deaf to all his entreaties and to his last prayers for mercy, as if he took pleasure in prolonging his torment, having seized him by the throat, slowly raised his weapon, and proceeded to execute his ferocious purpose. Striking him a violent blow upon the neck, he half severed his head from his body, and repeating his strokes with the utmost fury on various parts of his person, he soon laid the unhappy Giovanni dead at his feet. With the same unrelenting ferocity, he then separated the head from the yet warm and reeking corpse ; and bearing it along with him, he hastened from that wild and terrific scene, with the feelings rather of a demon than of a man. Insensible as yet to the retributive pangs that awaited him, he took his dark and solitary way back to the Portuguese capital, accompanied only by the bloody witness of his crime, over lonely plain, valley, and mountain, heedless alike of the smiles or frowns of nature, and of the sleeping vengeance of the heavens above him.

He did not scruple to present the head of his friend at court, claiming the reward due for the death of a criminal, whom he boasted to have slain with his own hand. Nor did he for a long period seem at all troubled with the recollection of so foul an offence, though, doubtless, however slow, his punishment would be no less sure, either here or hereafter. For it is almost impossible, indeed, to estimate the iniquity of an action, which, added to its cold-blooded ferocity, involved such an extent of enormous and unexpected ingratitude.

NOVELLA XXXV.

AT the period when the tyrant Nicocles swayed the sceptre of Sicyon, alike feared and hated by its citizens, two only were found, who equally distinguished by their rank, their wealth, and their spirit, disdained longer to bear the intolerable weight of his oppression. Surpassing their fellow citizens as well in courage as in rank, they were the first to conspire together how they might best achieve the freedom of their native place, though even by the death of its despotic ruler: aware that the seeds of liberty are best watered with the blood of its enemies. With this view, having fixed upon a certain hour and spot, they waited with much anxiety for the period of its accomplishment; but, seized with a sudden panic when the moment arrived, one of the two conspirators refused to proceed any further in the affair. Not satisfied with this, and afraid of being anticipated by his colleague, he went instantly to the palace of the tyrant, and the better to ingratiate himself, acquainted him with the whole transaction; affecting at the same time to have given ear to it only with a view of revealing the real author to the king, as was the duty

of every loyal subject. Having in this manner been made acquainted with the full particulars of the conspiracy, Nicocles, giving entire credit to the account, despatched forthwith a company of his guards to the residence of Timocrates, with orders to level the gates with the ground, and to bear the traitor alive into his presence.

The noble citizen was in this way seized and carried before the tyrant, who, having feasted his eyes with the sight of his victim, and thrown him into one of his most horrid dungeons, condemned him on the very same day to die. But, as it was the custom of those times that such as were found guilty of capital crimes, should be executed during the night within the walls of their dungeon, when their cries could not be heard, Timocrates was thus condemned to suffer on the following evening. When tidings of this terrific punishment came to the ears of his poor consort, Arsinoe, who was most tenderly attached to her husband, so great was her surprise and terror, as well nigh to deprive her of existence. On recovering sufficiently to dwell upon the dreadful subject, she long revolved every means that her affection could suggest, of averting so heavy and unexpected a calamity. She well knew, how worse than unavailing it would be to pour her prayers and tears at the feet of

the tyrant, a measure that might crown their sufferings, by bringing along with it the dishonour as well as the death of her husband. She resolved then, to think and to act only for herself; and it was not long before her ingenuity supplied her with an idea, which with fearless breast she prepared to carry into speedy effect. On the evening that her consort was to suffer, no sooner was it twilight, than wrapping herself in a dark cloak, and veiling her beauty in deep black crape, she took her fearful and solitary way, without acquainting a single friend with her purpose, towards the dungeon prepared for the tomb of all she held most dear. On her arrival, taking aside one of the guards, she besought him, bitterly weeping while she spoke, to permit her to see her husband for a few moments before he died, and to yield her the sad consolation of a last tear, a last embrace, without which they should neither of them die in peace. Touched at her deep and passionate distress, the rest of the guards gathered round her, and unable long to resist her entreaties, they all of them, catching the soft infection from each other, at length agreed to let her pass.

On beholding her husband, however, instead of longer giving way to womanly lamentations and tears, Arsinoe assumed all the fortitude of a heroine, boldly yet sweetly advising and consoling him, while she

entreated him no longer to despair. Then, hastily acquainting him with her plan, she began to array him in her own dress, and having disguised his face in the thick veil, and thrown the cloak over his shoulders, she took one kiss, breathed a soft farewell, and quietly assumed his place. The guards, believing that it was the lady returning, apparently drowned in grief, offered no sort of opposition; and in a little while Timocrates was beyond the limits of the tyrant's sway. But the hour was come, when the executioner proceeded with the guards to receive his victim from their hands, bearing along with him the infernal implements of his trade. What was their surprise, on approaching nearer, to lay their unhallowed hands upon a gentle and beauteous lady, who was immediately borne by the executioner into the tyrant's presence, to learn in what way he was to proceed. Here she was received with scowling and terrific looks, while she appeared wholly unable to answer the threats and inquiries of the incensed prince. Vainly attempting to hide her terror, she again and again burst into tears whenever she prepared to speak, so as even to awaken some touch of compassion in the tyrant's obdurate breast. "Be not so much alarmed, lady," he continued, in an altered tone; "what is it you fear? only reveal the real motives which led you

to set my power at defiance, to rescue my prisoner, a traitor doomed to death, and to deceive my guards?" — "Neither," replied Arsinoe, "was it to defy your power, nor to deceive your officers; it was love, only love and pity for my unhappy husband that impelled me to it; and I would hazard much, much more, even more than life itself, did I possess it, for his sake. When the fearful tidings burst upon me, when I heard that he was condemned to suffer an ignominious death, and when I reflected upon his whole life and conduct, nor found the slightest cause for blame, or for your princely displeasure, I was determined to peril every thing for his rescue. This I have done, and succeeded: and I willingly yield me a victim, if such I must be, in his place. Yet I would still hope that you will not behold my affliction and my tears unmoved; but attribute all my error and my crime to the tender love I bore him, a love which grew up with our earliest years, and which is such that you must tear away my heart-strings before I can quietly see him perish. Surely then you cannot pretend to exercise any law against true and devoted affection: severe as you are esteemed to be, you would not punish me for feelings over which I have no control."

Such was the affecting appeal of the wretched Ar-

sinoe, which produced so extraordinary an effect upon the mind of Nicocles, that, cruel and unforgiving as he naturally was, and vehemently exasperated against Timocrates in particular, he yet felt his fury and indignation die away within him at the sound of her mournful words. He, therefore, admitted her conjugal affection to be a sufficient justification of her conduct, and dismissed her uninjured from his presence. But not so fortunate were the guards, whose humanity was deserving of a better fate. Against them his wrath burned with unmitigated fury. "And now seize me those caitiff villains," cried the tyrant, "who, false to their trust, permitted access to my prisoner: their blood be upon their own heads; for I will never consent to be thus wholly cheated out of my revenge;" and the unhappy guards were accordingly led to execution by the hired mercenaries of the tyrant. In the course of a short time, Arsinoe, having obtained tidings of her husband, disguised herself in male attire, and accompanied by a single faithful servant, fled secretly from her house, and joined the object of her love in a distant and secure retirement.

Nobels of Niccolo Granucci.

NICCOLO GRANUCCI.*

THE family of this novelist, becoming partizans of the Guelf faction, were banished early in the fourteenth century from Lucca. Afterwards, on its restoration, it became very powerful, various branches spreading throughout the different states of Italy. From some circumstances, indeed, connected with the fortunes of his family, Granucci is said to have derived many of his stories, expressly stating in his work, as we learn from Mr. Dunlop,† that when on a visit to Sienna, in 1568, he availed himself of the occasion to reach the little town of Pienza, in the vicinity, for the purpose of inquiring whether there were any descendants of the family name remaining in those parts. He then goes on to relate, that two very respectable citizens bore him company to a monastery in the neighbourhood of Pienza, whence he

* *La piacevol Notte e lieto Giorno, Opera Morale di Nicolao Granucci di Lucca, indirizzato al molto Magnifico e Nobilissimo Sig. M. Giuseppe Arnolfini, Gentiluomo Lucchese. Venezia, appresso Giacomo Vidali, 8vo. 1574.*

† *History of Fiction, vol. ii. p. 469.*

subsequently proceeded to visit the Villa di Tojano, in company with one of the monks, who relates a variety of stories, and presents him, likewise, on parting, with a MS., which furnished him with the materials from which he compiled his work, and which, the author in his preface declares, “well merited the title of *Selva di varia lezione*.” Though the style of this writer can by no means boast the ease and elegance of some of the earlier novelists, it is nevertheless, for that age, extremely good. For being an avowed imitator and admirer of Boccaccio, he was at the pains of rendering his *Teseide*,* from *ottava rima* into prose; a task which fully entitled him, we think, to claim some acquaintance with the taste and purity of that writer’s language.

He flourished about the year 1570. His moral work entitled, “*La Piacevol Notte e Lieto Giorno*,” the Delightful Night and Pleasant Day, made its appearance, with the date of 1574, at Venice.

* *La Teseide di M. Giovanni Boccaccio, &c., di ottava rima nuovamente ridotta in prosa per Nicolao Granucci di Lucca, &c. Lucca. Presso Vincenzo Busdraghi: 1579.*

NICCOLO GRANUCCI.

NOVELLA I.

IN the magnificent city of Ferrara, about the time of duke Borso, dwelt a noble youth of the name of Polidoro. Becoming deeply attached to one of the most beautiful girls in the whole place, he had soon the happiness of acquiring such an interest in her affections, as to induce her to yield her consent to a speedy union. As she had numerous other suitors, however, of whom Polidoro was extremely jealous, she was persuaded, in order to allay his apprehensions, in the mean time, unknown to her friends and family, to give him frequent meetings, in one of which he prevailed upon her to accept the marriage ring from his hand, as a pledge of his honourable views. Having then taken leave of each other, the promised bride retired to rest; but soon after midnight she was awoke, and imagined she heard some one entering her chamber window: she arose; and beheld by the light of the moon, one of the most daring of her rejected lovers, who had already made good his en-

trance. Having only a single moment to decide how she could best defend her menaced honour, which she was aware she should equally forfeit by giving vent to her cries, she seized a weapon which lay near her, and smote the youth so severely on the temples, that he immediately fell headlong to the ground, at the very moment when he fancied he was about to succeed in his attempt. His cries drawing the officers of justice to the spot, a strict search took place, during which, the unfortunate Polidoro, being the only person found near the place, was forthwith seized, upon suspicion of having assassinated his rival, and was thrown into the public prison.

Fearful only of casting the least imputation upon the reputation of her he loved, he at once admitted the charge of having perpetrated the deed, a supposed crime for which he was adjudged to suffer death. Tidings of the unhappy result of this affair coming, the ensuing day, to the ears of his betrothed bride, she hesitated not an instant in what way to act. Heedless of consequences, she set out for the palace of the duke, where, half wild with grief and terror at the idea of her lover having already suffered, she became clamorous for an audience, the people on all sides making way for her, until she was at length stopped by the officer upon guard at the ducal gates.

Her passionate appeals, however, for admittance were here irresistible, and she was conducted in a short time into the audience chamber, before the duke and his whole court. But regardless of surrounding objects, she singled out him of whom she was in search, and throwing herself at his feet in all the sweet disorder of distressed beauty, which heightened rather than diminished her charms, she besought his clemency and pity in the following terms: "Heaven, that has given me access to your excellency, will, I fervently trust, incline your heart also to listen to me, to listen to justice and to truth. Let not the innocent, my honoured lord, suffer for the guilty; the cause for which I appear before you, however much it may seem to reflect upon myself, will not permit me to be longer silent. Believe me, then, when I say that the prisoner Polidoro and my unhappy self have been long, though secretly, betrothed to each other, and we were on the eve of becoming united, when the deceased youth, for whose death he has been made responsible, urged by envy and disappointment, had the shameless audacity to make attempts upon my honour, by stealing his way into my chamber by night. At the same hour came my betrothed husband, whom I had consented to meet, in or-

der to arrange measures of reconciliation with our friends, as well as to obviate the effects of some ungrounded jealousy in regard to the deceased, which had been some time before preying upon his mind. And for this reason only had I consented to unite my fate with his, before we had succeeded in obtaining the favourable decision of our friends. We had scarcely taken leave of each other, when, on retiring to rest, I was soon after startled out of my slumbers by hearing the sash of my chamber window open, and beheld with terror the head of the deceased, who had succeeded in scaling the walls, and was about to invade the sanctuary of my rest. Impelled at once by fear and indignation, I snatched the sword that I have long kept near my couch, and struck the invader of my honour with the utmost strength I could command. He fell to the ground, and by the just award of heaven, rather than by any power of mine, he shortly afterwards expired.

“ In the tumult thus caused, it was not long before the captain of the band with his followers rushed towards the spot. What was my surprise and horror, then, to hear this very morning that my beloved and innocent Polidoro had been just seized, convicted, and lay under sentence of death, preferring rather to

suffer every thing than even to betray my name. Deserted, alone, and fearful of confiding the circumstances of our union to any ; fearful even of the jealous reproaches of my Polidoro, to whom or whither could I turn for advice and aid—whither, I repeated in my despair, but to the source of honour and justice itself, at the feet of our most noble and righteous duke?”

Here, no longer able to control her emotions, the lovely Ortensia ceased to speak, but not to weep, until the duke kindly raising her up, and assuring her she had no cause for such excessive sorrow, as far as it lay in his power to remove it, she attempted to recover her composure. “But is he free? is he pardoned?” inquired the anxious girl, with breathless haste, almost resisting his efforts to raise her from the ground. “Yes, yes, you are both free,” rejoined the duke, with one of his most benevolent and irresistible smiles; “you are both free to be as happy as you please, and, as I doubt not, you deserve to be, as far as my influence, at least, with both your parents can be supposed to be of any avail. For it is impossible that I should not believe what you say; your words and looks have the stamp of truth impressed upon them; and the only part of

the affair, I think, which we have to regret, is your surpassing loveliness and worth, which doubtless led to the fatal enterprize of the poor enamoured boy. You have taught others, however, by his fate, fair lady, to keep a more respectful distance ; and we are far from wishing to find fault with you for shewing the courage of the heroine as well as the affection of the woman. You have our full approbation and respect." But the scene which she had now gone through, and even supported, until the duke ceased to speak, with so much animation and courage, was too affecting to be longer borne ; she gazed timidly around the court, and hearing some murmurs of applause as the duke concluded, aware that the eyes of numbers were upon her, all her womanly feelings, all her sensibility and delicacy, came into sudden play ; she grew pale, she trembled, and the next moment fainted in the duke's arms. " I trust we have done no mischief here," he continued, as he himself bore her, followed by the princesses, into another saloon ; " she will recover, and we will all of us yet be present to grace her approaching nuptials." And our noble duke performed what he had thus promised ; for he himself saw and reconciled the rival families : and as he

watched the hand of the bright Ortensia conferred upon the happy Polidoro, he observed to one of the courtiers near him, "I think she did well to put the other poor fellow first out of his pain; he could not have borne this."

Novels of Ascanio Mori da Ceno.



ASCANIO MORI DA CENO.*

ALTHOUGH an accomplished writer, a soldier, and a scholar, Mori does not stand in the first rank of the novelists of the sixteenth century, subsequent to which period few good writers of Italian fiction have flourished. He was by birth a Mantuan, and spent the greatest part of his life in the service of the princes of the house of Gonzaga. One of the members of this family he accompanied into Hungary, with the view of assisting the emperor Maximilian against the Turks, in his campaigns with the famous Solyman. He next entered into the service of Venice, as a volunteer, in its wars with the same power. From these circumstances, and the dedication of his novels to Vincenzo Gonzaga, prince of Mantua, we gather that he wrote towards the close of the sixteenth century. He proposed a second series of his stories; but these, as far as can be ascertained, he either never produced, or never published. Each novel is introduced with a

* *Prima Parte delle Novelle di Ascanio Mori da Ceno.* Mantua, Francesco Osanna, 8vo. 1585.

poetical address to some prince of the houses of Gonzaga or of Medici, in the form of a madrigal or a sonnet; for which, however, he does not seem to have been indebted to the pen of his friend, Torquato Tasso, with whom he is said to have been very intimate. An interesting letter, indeed, written by the great poet to the novelist, is yet extant, an extract from which is given in Mr. Black's "Life of Tasso." Mori is by no means so voluminous a writer as many of his contemporaries, the number of his stories not exceeding fifteen: these are dedicated to his patron, Vincenzo Gonzaga, the prince who so basely assassinated the Admirable Crichton. The third in the series is a story, to be found in the following selection, of a messenger, travelling post with a pardon for a criminal; but stopping to observe the whole process of an execution just as he arrived, he does not deliver his message until all is over. Many of his novels are supposed to consist of real incidents, often very minutely described, with particular allusion to the time and place, though he affects to disguise the names, *per convenienti rispetti*,—for good reasons. This he takes care to repeat in several of his historical tales, shewing from various little circumstances, that he was well acquainted with the parties. Thus in his fourth novel, of Giulio

and Lidia, he observes in regard to his heroine, after omitting the place of her residence, *per convenienti rispetti*, that he does not know whether to rank her among the downright plain or the beautiful; but that if all the handsome women were to be banished, she would run very little risk. The same might be observed of his eighth novel, and many others, all which, we may add, are distinguished for their humour and for the easiness of their style.

ASCANIO MORI DA CENO.

NOVELLA II.

THERE once dwelt in our good city of Mantua, a certain Messer Maffeo Strada, an elderly gentleman of very unobjectionable manners, and well to do in the world. But, though extremely active and vigilant in his affairs, he was not forgetful of his social duties, inasmuch as having lost his own wife and family, he took into his charge an orphan nephew, for the purpose of supplying the place of his parents, and educating him in a manner befitting his birth. When he found that the boy discovered little turn for letters, his kind uncle very properly took him away from school, with the intention of devoting him to mercantile affairs, until he should be able to enter upon his own concerns. And such was the young man's prudence and discretion, that he quickly imbibed the habits of business practised by his patron, insomuch as to excite the admiration and surprise of all his friends and acquaintance. On this account he daily gained ground in the good graces of his uncle, who began to

regard him with as much pride and pleasure as if he had been his own son. On the other hand, the young man always shewed his uncle the respect due to a father; and so great was his mercantile proficiency, that when the old gentleman was seized with a series of tertian ague-fits, he was absolutely competent to take upon himself the charge of the office. Still his uncle's fits were a source of great disquietude to him, and he spared no pains and expense to restore him to his usual excellent state of health. The care of young Federigo, therefore, for by this name he had been christened, soon placed old Messer Matteo on his legs again, which were directly employed to bring him down as fast as possible to his counting-house, where his nephew received him at the head of all the clerks with three commercial cheers, evincing the greatest satisfaction in the world, while the news diffused a placid joy over the countenances of all the jobbers in the city. He was still, however, advised by his doctors to adhere for a period to his gentle soporific and perspiring draughts, in order, as they assured him, to carry off the dregs of his disease, under which discipline he remained somewhat weak and querulous.

His careful nephew, unacquainted with this last prescription, one morning went into his room to con-

sult him on some affairs, and was surprised to find him buried under an enormous load of bed-clothes, just as he was beginning to promote the medicinal warmth. He had closed his eyes, and lay perfectly quiet, invoking the moisture to appear, with all a patient's anxiety and fervency of feeling, which cannot endure the least interference with the grand object he has in view. The careful nephew approached on tip-toe, fearful of rousing his good uncle too suddenly, and was concerned to behold him lying apparently in so piteous a plight. Anxious lest he had met with a relapse, he began to accuse himself of not having been sufficiently careful in preventing him from resuming business too soon. The old gentleman at first laughed a little on hearing his over-scrupulous observations; then he became rather uneasy at his repeated inquiries and lamentations over him; and lastly, he was afraid that this untimely interruption might check the course of the fluids, without in the least benefitting the solids, respecting both of which he had lately become very particular. In fact he began to fear that the necessary perspiration would be stopped, which, next to the stopping of the firm, was the thing he most dreaded in the world. When his careful nephew, therefore, again began to hint his precautions that he

should not enter too soon into the office, the patient said in a somewhat angry tone: "For God's sake, get you gone; your lamentations make me quite sick; I tell you I am only taking a sweat."—"But I am sorry to think you have got a relapse; what can be the occasion of it? Do let me consult the doctor about it, for it were better to take it in time;" and so saying, he was hastening out of the room. No longer able to control his temper, and too impatient to explain, yet dreading to rise in a state of incipient perspiration, the old merchant raised his voice as loud as he dared, crying, "Don't go to the doctor, I say, and a plague upon you; only go out of the room." Upon this the young man, approaching nearer, and marking his uncle's rising colour, who at the same time bestowed the most abusive epithets upon him, began to think he was a little touched in the head, and that there was the greater occasion for a sharp leech the more he asserted the contrary. As he stood in a thoughtful posture, with his eyes fixed on the inflamed countenance of his uncle, the calmness of his manner, and his fixed resolution of calling a physician, so incensed the latter, that he suddenly burst into a violent rage, threatening not only to cut him off without a farthing, but to knock his brains out instantly if he ventured to provoke him more; for which pur-

pose he would rise though he was in a beautiful perspiration. These words now confirmed the young gentleman's suspicions that something was wrong in his uncle's upper regions, being quite unlike himself, and he began to lament his situation louder than ever, ending with prayers and ejaculations for a physician. The uncle upon this put his threats into execution, leaping suddenly from his bed, while Federico, on the other hand, believing him to be seized with a delirious paroxysm, ran towards him to keep him down, lest he should commit some horrible mischief. Escaping, however, from his hands, the enraged patient endeavoured to seize a large cudgel which he kept in the room, a design against which the young gentleman exerted himself to the utmost of his power. A sharp contest for the possession of the stick now took place, sometimes inclining to one side, sometimes to the other ; though the youth, believing his uncle endowed with the supernatural strength of a lunatic, was frequently on the point of being overcome. His great object was to secure the patient before he succeeded in obtaining the cudgel, and inflicting the severe castigation which he threatened ; and, gathering strength from his despair, he began to press Messer Maffeo very hard, who, engaging in his night-cap and gown, certainly fought at a great dis-

advantage. His breath began to grow short, and his strength to fail, and no longer able to utter a word, he fairly yielded to his adversary. The latter not venturing to let a madman loose, held him firmly down, pinioning his hands behind him, and fixing his knees upon his stomach. When he had at length bound him, hand and foot, the careful nephew again commenced his lamentations over him, regretting that so sensible a man should have run mad so suddenly. On this his uncle beginning to grin and shew his teeth, he very calmly buried him under a heap of bed-clothes, and locking him up fast in the chamber, went to consult a physician. The doctor, being just on the point of visiting one of the young princes at the court, had only time to advise the careful nephew to apply a couple of sharp blisters upon his uncle's shoulders, and he would endeavour to call upon him in the evening. He would then, if necessary, order him something of a still more caustic nature, and bleed the patient copiously. For there was nothing, he said, like meeting the evil in the beginning, and applying the remedies while the patient had strength to bear them. The anxious Federigo accordingly hastened to the surgeon's house, and finding him, unluckily for his uncle, at home, he took him, armed with lancet and blisters, along

with him. Proceeding with all haste, they soon arrived at the patient's residence, the young man relating by the way the whole of his late engagement, as a clear proof of the patient's lunacy. The ancient housekeeper met them at the door, crossing herself devoutly, and shedding tears, as she repeated further instances of the insanity of her poor master, who had never ceased to bite and kick, and roar most outrageously, since his nephew had left the house.

And indeed well he might, for instead of being allowed to rise and attend to business, as usual, he found himself violently provoked, assaulted, bound down, like a felon, and locked up as in a cage; and all by his prudent, careful nephew. Such a case was enough to have driven Solomon himself out of his wits, to say nothing of a man of business; and by the time his persecutors approached the chamber, the violence of his proceedings certainly afforded strong presumptive evidence against him. When they appeared in his presence, however, he grew more furious than before. "What, in heaven's name, must we do?" cried his nephew. "Let us stay till he has worn himself out, and the paroxysm is somewhat abated; we can then apply our caustics," said the barbarous leech, "without fear of risk."—"No, I

think we had better begin now," replied the careful nephew, "let us lose no time; for he will do himself some injury if we permit him to go on thus. Follow me, and do not be afraid; for I think I shall manage him better this time," continued our young hero, with the utmost coolness; "and when once I have pinioned down his arms, you may seize him by the legs."—"But he is mad, quite mad," cried the surgeon, "let him alone, I say: when the frenzy subsides, you will find he will go to sleep, and we can seize him then." Such in fact was shortly the case, for wearied with his violent efforts and exertions, the poor man, soon after they retired, threw himself exhausted upon his couch, and fell into a sound sleep. But he was not long permitted to enjoy it; for the wily leech then addressing his nephew, said: "Now is the time: he is in a deep slumber, and what we have to do let us do quickly."—"Softly, softly," said the careful Federigo, as he laid hands upon the poor merchant, "there, I have him now; bring the blisters, and a bason for the blood, before he is well awake."—"Murder! help, help! for heaven's sake, help!" cried the patient, suddenly awakening, and beholding the fell surgeon approaching with the lancet and bason in hand; but vain were his cries; vain all his efforts to extricate himself from his impending

fate. The more he struggled, the more did Federigo think it his duty to use prompt remedies, and Messer Maffeo shortly lay as helpless as a new-born child. The surgeon, however, in securing his legs, had already received several severe contusions in the face ; for which he was proceeding to take ample revenge in the blood of his enemy. At first, indeed, he thought of running away, but the young man encouraged him to do his duty, while the patient on his side, exhibited symptoms of extreme rage and terror at his approach. The phlebotomist again advanced, and again drew back, like a spider that has got a wasp in his toils, holding his trenchant blade in his hand, nor was it until he was offered a double fee, that he flew at him, and, in spite of all his shrieks and struggles, fixed a deadly blister upon either shoulder. He next attempted to draw blood, the careful nephew holding the arm, while the surgeon, with the same caution, proceeded to pierce the vein ; and having accomplished this, and applied some hot cataplasms to the soles of his feet, the man of blood departed. The patient now lay exposed to the rising pangs of the caustics, bound hand and foot. Growing hotter and hotter, they at length became so intolerable, that he declared he felt them eating his flesh away and drinking his blood : that gout and colic were a mere jest

to them ; and that he would give up the whole of the business, and all he was possessed of in the world, if his cruel nephew would consent to release him. The latter, however, only thought it a further sign of madness, and proposed to adopt still stronger applications, saying to the servant in the presence of the wretched patient : “ Run quick, as far as the surgeon’s ; bring a large blister for the head, and I will shave him myself.” Bitterly now, did the poor merchant rue the hour when he admitted his careful nephew into his house, nor was it until he found all threats and imprecations vain, and after the blisters had done their work, that he succeeded, by dint of quiet reason and argument, in convincing the hopeful youth of the real state of the case, and that he had required nothing beyond a gentle sudorific.

NOVELLA III.

DURING the lifetime of Luigi Gonzaga, lord of Castel Goffredo, of distinguished memory, there flourished two very notorious rogues, who were among the most remarkable in all his dominions, for the number of their depredations: but whose ingenuity could not, at length, prevent their falling into the hands of justice. They were brothers, and natives of Cremona; and such was their sense of their own enormities, that on being taken, they did not scruple to confess them, without awaiting the tardier process of torture. They may be said, therefore, to have been sentenced at their own desire, having given very sufficient reasons why they should suffer. Luckily, however, there was a certain Messer Pietro, a rich uncle of theirs, well stricken in years and somewhat infirm, who still retained such a regard for the honour of his family, that he did not altogether like the idea of seeing his nephews hanged.

Without staying, therefore, until he felt himself perfectly restored, for he still had a few twinges of the gout, he first lined his purse well with ducats, and then set out towards the seat of justice, deter-

mined to try whether they would have any efficacy in removing the stain which would otherwise infallibly attach to the family escutcheon. When he arrived at the place, he began by the usual methods of prayer and petition to beg the lives of his unlucky young relatives, a process which proved perfectly fruitless, inasmuch as the duke's love of justice was in exact proportion to his dislike of villains and his encouragement of honest men. Besides, he had put his hand to their sentence, and seemed resolved for once, right or wrong, that they should be shorter by the head, which had devised so many ingenious plans of mischief. Tears, and moans, and groans, were all richly lavished by the old man to no sort of purpose, until he had very nearly reached the day of execution, before he could prevail upon himself to change his measures, and resort to the more solid arguments he had brought in his purse. The duke had already been so much annoyed by him, that he always rode away on his approach; yet wherever he happened to stop or turn, the old man was sure to intercept, to meet, or to attack him in his rear. Wearied at length with his importunities, the duke summoned his train, and rode away to hunt at Goito, not far from Mantua, where he understood that Duke Frederic II. was then engaged in the same sport. He was received by him

very graciously, and proved a very agreeable addition to the party, who indulged themselves in every kind of pleasure they could imagine ; until one day, as they were issuing forth, the countenance of the wearisome old man again presented itself, and he began exactly in the same tone, with his petition, where he had before left off. Yes, he stood there on his gouty feet, but how he got there, nobody could tell, except the poor steed, which in his haste he had ridden to death by the way. So his excellency was here compelled to hold a fresh colloquy, which was lengthened by some of the courtiers, with whose easy consciences the bribes of the cunning old Cremonese had already been busy. Such was the effect, indeed, that they now began to support the old gentleman in his pretensions ; observing first, that it was a sad pity, and then, as the duke took it easily, that it was a horrible piece of injustice, that two such fine young fellows should be hanged. In proportion as the good uncle plied them with ducats, they became more and more clamorous for mercy ; insisting, among other things, that the two rogues had served like valiant soldiers in the duke's army, and deserved a better fate. For they knew that this would be a powerful plea with him ; and such were, in short, the lies and impostures of all kinds which they succeeded in palming,

upon their noble master, that he really began to think the prisoners were about to be very ill used, though they ought to have been executed long ago. They moreover lauded the duke for his great humanity, and as such sycophants are apt to do, they so completely won his ear by their vile flatteries, as to convince him that it would be one of the most pious acts in the world to revoke the sentence against two of the most accomplished villains in his dominions. Indeed he was glad to be able on any terms to escape the sight of the old man, and the worrying entreaties of his courtiers. The petitioner's ducats being well nigh exhausted, there was no time to be lost; for he knew that if he did not carry his nephews' pardon in his pocket before they were quite gone, the promises made would be void, and he should have the whole to pay over again. With his last bribe, therefore, he prevailed upon a wily courtier to procure an order, signed by the duke's hand, to the judge of the district, remitting the punishment for the sake of a slight fine, and having received the ducal seal, it was delivered to the troublesome old man. By this time, he was become nearly weary of his undertaking, and almost regretted, as he parted with his last *douceur*, that he had not left his hopeful

nephews to their fate. In fact, such was his chagrin, that he was seized with an acute fever, only the very day before the time appointed for their execution, while their pardon still remained in his pocket. What was now to be done? It was impossible he could reach the seat of justice himself; and in whom could he confide so precious a charge? On consulting the wily courtier, a messenger was pointed out to him; one of the most celebrated for swiftness of foot, and secrecy of despatch, among all the scouts at court. He was hired, therefore, at a moment's warning; while the sole consolation of the good uncle was the hope of living long enough to behold once more the faces of his wretched nephews, and of bestowing upon them a little dying advice.

Having given him, therefore, the most particular directions to lose no time upon the road, and even paid a sum in advance; the troublesome old gentleman awaited with some anxiety the news of his trusty messenger's return. He was to be at the place early the next morning, and to deliver the letter into the judge's own hands; after which he was to receive a further reward. Fired at this last idea, and eager to maintain his character as the most swift-footed Mercury at court, he posted away, without stopping until

he reached Castel Goffredo, where, taking a little repose, he proceeded early to the city gates, observing to the captain that he was on the duke's business, and must have his pass. Proceeding accordingly, he was just entering the great square, near the judge's house, when he was met by an immense concourse of people, in the midst of whom were the two identical prisoners, heavily chained, just going to the place of execution. How should the messenger, however, know this? He believed he was in very good time, and being quite unacquainted with the particular nature of the business, he determined to stop and watch the whole proceeding. Falling into the crowd, he approached the scaffold, saw them mount, and witnessed them take their final leave of the world; after which he proceeded very leisurely, with their pardon in his pocket, to the house of the judge. He congratulated himself by the way on the expeditious manner in which he had fulfilled the old man's commands, and presented himself with no little importance at the mansion of justice, expecting to receive a further fee, with many commendations for his celerity and despatch.

On opening the letter, and finding the nature of its contents, the judge uttered an exclamation of

surprise, watching the messenger attentively, and questioning him very narrowly as to the occasion of his delay. "Dolt, idiot, blunderhead," he exclaimed, "when did you set out from Goito?" "One hour before midnight; all in the dark, please your lordship; that is, I got my orders about that time, and set off at two." "You did, did you?" replied the judge. "You are enough to make Solomon himself blaspheme; where did you stop, you most egregious fool?" "Stop, stop? I ran every mile of the way, please your lordship; and never stopped at all, except to see two robbers executed this morning, and I knew I could afford time for that." "Ah, villain, idle villain," returned the judge; "do you know you have been the death of both of them, and it were well if you could lose your head in their place:" and he proceeded to upbraid him in no very gentle terms, being really concerned at so untoward an accident; and, moreover, being, for a judge, very humanely inclined. In this last point, indeed, he was very unlike the generality of his learned brethren, who upon passing sentence before dinner, or in a bad humour, are very apt to make light of persons' lives. Our swift footed Mercury now found himself in a strange dilemma; for in place of being praised, as on former

occasions, for his speed and alacrity, he only gained hard words; his lordship threatening to make a severe example of him. His pride, however, was so much hurt in being reproached as an idle, lounging, slovenly sluggard, unworthy of the duke's confidence, or indeed of any thing but a halter, that he could no longer restrain his indignation. "My lord," he replied, "your lordship ought to speak within some bounds, and recollect that you are speaking to one of the best, nay, the very best and swiftest foot courier in the duke's service. Consider, I set out at midnight, and I got here before day-break this morning, stopping only, as I tell you, to see those two villains kicking their heels in the air; and surely I had a right to have some little diversion, after running so many leagues so very fast. The old gentleman ought to have told me the particular business I was engaged for; as it is, you see it is not my fault." "It is your fault, and I will make an example of you for it, sir: I will teach you a little more humanity, than to take a pleasure and lose your time in beholding tragedies of this kind." "Oh, lord, lord," cried the poor fellow, falling at the judge's feet, "forgive me this time, and I will never stop as long as I have breath again. Oh, oh! I wish I had only known I was to save the poor, dear, innocent crea-

tures' lives, I would have been here before day-break; I swear by my legs, I would." "Know? you rogue," echoed the judge, "did not you know it was a matter of life and death?" "No, my lord; nobody told me any thing about that," cried the distressed courier. "Why, that something alters the aspect of the case, to be sure," said the judge; "it will turn out to be the old gentleman's fault, I believe, after all." "And he will most likely be dead before I get back," cried the courier; "so that there will be no need to tell him at all." "Aye, aye, you will finish him and all his relations, I dare say," said the judge; "get away with you, rogue, and do not stop to see any body hanged by the way; but it is all perhaps for the best, it is all in the hands of the Lord." And so in truth, it appeared to be; inasmuch as neither of these devoted wretches were in the least deserving of pardon, and justly suffered the penalty of their manifold sins and offences. Of this his lordship took care to send a full account to the duke, regretting nevertheless, that, for once, it had not been in his power to comply with his excellency's commands, which he should have done, had they been arch fiends of mischief instead of common felons, by pardoning them, as he had wished. "The whole blame of the affair," he

said, "attached to the old uncle, who ought not to have entrusted so important a commission to the hands of an ignorant messenger, who instead of performing it, stopped by the way to see his nephews hanged."

Novels of Celio Malespini.

CELIO MALESPINI.*

CELIO MALESPINI, a Florentine gentleman, though said to have traced his birth to Milan, flourished about the middle of the sixteenth century. No writer of fiction produced more abundant specimens of the kind, nor more rude and unpolished, perhaps, in point of style. In this respect, indeed, his novels, amounting to two hundred, are said to be esteemed, in Italy, as complete examples of almost every fault of language and expression, to be avoided by writers of a pure taste. But his materials, and his skilful and humorous adaptation of them, are often excellent; while his harshness of phraseology will not be found to grate upon the ears of the English reader. The author feigns the relation of his novels to have taken place at a palace in the district of Trivigi, whither several ladies and gentlemen had resorted, to escape the ravages of the plague, then raging at Venice.

* *Ducento Novelle del Sig. Celio Malespini, nelle quali si raccontano diversi avvenimenti così lieti come mesti e stravaganti, &c.* 4to. Venezia, 1609.

This is known to have occurred in the year 1576; and from several circumstances related in the novels themselves, we may gather the date of their composition to have been not many years subsequent. A great portion are believed to have been founded upon real events; and in many instances, the mention of persons, and of particular times and places, is introduced. It is thus he alludes to Bianca Cappello, afterwards consort of Francesco de' Medici, grand duke of Tuscany, whose nuptials were celebrated in 1579, and are very minutely described by the novelist; and there is reason to believe that he wrote shortly after the period here alluded to.

Malespini entered into the service of the King of Spain, under the government of the Milanese, though in what capacity does not appear. Some particulars, however, may be gathered from Novel XI. Part II., in which he gives a description of the splendid nuptials of duke Guglielmo of Mantua, celebrated in the year 1561. He acquaints us that the Cavalier Lione Aretino and Luca Contile wrote, on this occasion, to the Marquess Pescara, entreating him to send them some gentleman of the Malespini family, in the service of king Philip, to assist them, as their particular friend, in a due preparation for the approaching solemnities. Most probably, this was no other than

their friend Celio, who seems to have contributed not a little to the humour of the scene. After holding a public office, some time, in the Milanese, Malespini proceeded to Venice, where he was residing at the time of the pestilence, which he describes in his forty-eighth Novel, Part I., as having laid desolate that beautiful city. There, with more fearful reality than that of De Foe, he kept a journal of the scenes he witnessed, which he transmitted to his brother Scipione. He displays in his writings an intimate acquaintance with the whole topography of the city of Venice, and also introduces persons speaking in the Venetian dialect, such as it was in use at the period when he wrote. Subsequently he passed into the court of Duke Francesco de' Medici, where he occupied the post of secretary. It is not with certainty known where, or in what manner, he terminated his days; but what is more to the point, his stories are many of them amusing, and moreover curious in preserving some historical particulars deserving of record.

This notice will be concluded with a brief account of the singular institutions of the "*Compagni della Calza*," or Knights of the Stocking, the festival of which was celebrated in our author's time at Venice, and is described by him. The Abbate Giustiniani erroneously ranks them among the orders of chivalry, and

traces their origin as high as that of the Maestri de' Cavalieri of Venice, during the infancy of the republic. Schonebek and Mennenio are of opinion that they took their rise at the same time, and with the same views as the Cavalieri della Banda of Spain, in 1368. Père Heliot is also mistaken, in referring them to a military origin ; as it is clearly apparent from their rules, that the members were private gentlemen, who merely obtained the sanction of the magistrates, without any authority of the prince, or of a supreme head. Their origin is to be referred to the fifteenth century, though they chiefly flourished during the sixteenth ; many of the members having had their portraits taken by the first Venetian artists of the age, the Bellini, Carpaccio, Conegliano, and even by Titian himself. They appear to have assembled merely for the purpose of public and private entertainments, as games, feasts, and theatrical representations. As the device of their association, they wore a particoloured stocking, richly embroidered and ornamented with pearls and jewels, from which the company derived its name. It was afterwards divided into different fraternities, as the *Compagnia de' Floridi, Sempiterni*, &c. each of which had its own laws and officers, and its peculiar habits.

CELIO MALESPINI.

PART I. NOVELLA XLI.

DRAW nearer to me, then, gentle ladies and cavaliers all, while I proceed to treat you with some account of the grand and sumptuous festivals held by the Company of the Calza, during the period of the Venetian carnival. It was about the time when our rich Sicilian friend here, whom we all of us, I believe, well know, first became desirous of residing in this our splendid city of Venice, and very happily fixed upon the above glorious and joyous season to grace his arrival, and give him a taste for his new abode. Indeed, he found he relished it so much, that he is said to have despatched half a dozen expresses for his lovely lady, one of the most beautiful women in Palermo, to join him immediately, if she wished to retain the least interest in his affections, as he should assuredly be assailed by the most potent temptations of all sorts, on all sides, which it would be next to a miracle he should resist. For the grand carnival was at hand, an epidemic of wit and pleasure

had seized upon the heads of all, and he had already elected himself chief of a new company, called The Ten, who had pledged themselves to the public to surpass all others, in every kind of innocent riot, mischief, and excess. Now, as each of the ten members had agreed to conduct a lady twice a week to their banquet, besides furnishing ten crowns towards defraying the company's supper, it inevitably followed that he must often be indebted to some fair deputy, in his own lady's absence, to grace her place. Hearing these tidings, it was not long before the beauty of Palermo made her appearance here, as a kind of guardian angel to our poor friend, and to the extreme envy or admiration of more than half the ladies in Venice. The Ten then began in good earnest to celebrate the season, assembling always at the best house, with the most splendid establishment belonging to the company, though each contributed his own portion to the entertainment, including the rarest exhibitions of every kind. Thus nobly devoting themselves to every variety of amusement, their ingenuity was kept always upon the stretch, how to vie most successfully with the rival Company of the Calza, famous for its heroic excesses and grand exhibitions of old, supported by the wealth and patronage of the chief nobility of the city, each hav-

ing taken a vow to render the scene as brilliant and happy, as games, and jousts, and balls, and banquets, music, and comedy, and every species of humour could make it. With this view a glorious theatre was seen, at the command of the Company of the Calza, to spring up, as if by enchantment, into the air, with its rich painted pillars, and cornices of white marble, its friezes of gold, and its interior ornamented with all the most beautiful specimens of art of which the city could boast. Below these, were seen stationed still rarer forms of breathing symmetry and beauty, a hundred of our most lovely women, representing ancient statues, their folds of white drapery arranged and flowing, as if wrought out of marble by the sculptor's hand. Such a blaze of beauty bursting upon the spectator as he entered, produced the most lively impression, heightened as it was by the splendour of gems and jewellery, and the music of a thousand instruments which filled the whole air, and was heard along the waters; for, will you believe me, when I assure you that this vast theatre, with all its splendid embellishments, was not the offspring of the earth, but borne along by two immense galleys, like a creature of the ocean, over the Adriatic waves? Surrounded by a thousand light and sea-winged gondolas, I saw her bearing back her proud and glorious

way, until she had reached the bridge Rivoalto, and thence returned to St. Mark's, safely discharging her beauteous freight, while the air rang with plaudits as the fair procession moved forwards to the great hall of council ready prepared for their reception. For Justice herself had now assumed another face; the benches were turned into dining tables, the symbols of punishment were exchanged for the milder emblems of the queen of love and the god of wine; while the fairest and brightest faces of Venice feasted the eyes of the proudest and bravest cavaliers in the world.

Desirous of beholding so rare an exhibition as the sailing theatre afforded, the new convivial company, with our Sicilian at their head, could no longer refrain from besetting the piazza of St. Mark's, on whose steeple stood a Turkish mountebank, ready to throw himself headlong down, without hurting himself, if possible, for the amusement of his friends. In this manner, before the enchanted theatre had finished its voyage, the ladies been safely handed out again by their *cavalieri serventi*, and the Turk leaped in safety from the very top of St. Mark's, upon a rope stretched out below to receive him, to the terror of all beholders, the best part of the day was well nigh flown. Our joyous company again departed, bearing with

them the materials for their evening festival, towards the Merciarìa, and thence towards San Jacopo dall' Orio, to lay siege to the mansion of merchant Gazzuola, and destroy the fragile preparations he had been making to meet the carnival, for the last twelve months. On their way, however, just as they approached San Giuliano, they had the misfortune to encounter the procession of the old Company of the Calza, in all their pride of patrician pomp, followed by a vast retinue, bearing their gold and silver censers and covers, and, at no great distance, the delicious materials of the banquet itself, according to established custom, from time immemorial. Here, then, was a delicate question to be discussed, a nice point of difference; for whether was the old or the new company of revellers to yield the way? Unluckily it was not to be adjusted by dint of discussion; and a singular contest at length commenced between the banquet-bearers on either side, a truly heroic battle of the cooks, in which some of the implements of their pleasing art became formidable weapons, dealing very unpalatable strokes, while showers of cups, and bowls, and glasses, with still more precious wares, flew winged with their own destruction on every side. Great, indeed, were the feats of strength and skill wrought by the followers

of either company, animated as they were by the presence of the head-cooks, and impelled to fresh efforts by their bottle-holders, the butlers, who ceased not to renew the flagging spirits of the combatants with the "red grape's juice." As long as such ammunition held out, the conflict continued to rage with equal ferocity on both sides, until the old Company being the most liberally supplied, the opposite party was at length compelled to give way. Many heroes had already measured their length upon the ground, some levelled with ladles, some stabbed with toasting forks, and others lingering under the torments of too much hot macaroni and burning soup.

But as the patrician chiefs of both companies, as well of the Company of the Calza as of the Ten, had deigned to take not the least notice of the affray, it was incumbent upon the more plebeian class to marshal themselves once more into order, and conduct the procession in the same style as before. Still, they could by no means flatter themselves with making so splendid and magnificent an exhibition as they had done: the lustre of their whole equipment, of their arms, their dresses, their plate, and of their very scutcheons, was faded, as it were, and gone. The people no longer continued to gaze upon it with the same veneration and respect; having been infinitely

better amused in witnessing the engagement and sharing some portion of the spoils of the field. The procession, however, was still extremely grand and imposing, though shorn of some of its beams; the richness and variety of the dresses, the dazzling splendour of hose and doublet, and the embroidered stockings, the badge of the order, covered with gold and silver lace, sparkling with precious pearls and gems, diamonds, emeralds, and rubies, could surely be equalled by nothing less than a coronation day. There walked in the train of each lord four pages decked in rich particoloured vests, and mantles of silk, followed again by an infinite multitude of plate and cup bearers, with a great variety of precious vases, filled with sweets and perfumes, with the rarest fruits and birds, and the most exquisite imitations wrought in sugar, of almost every kind of object existing under the sun. Among these were to be seen a fleet of glorious galleys, sailing amidst a sea of sweets; the boldest figures in relief mingling in mock battles; ladies, with bright faces, watching cavaliers contending in the ring; and a thousand other ingenious devices: sights which called forth the applauding shouts of the spectators.

But the procession of the companies by night, amidst a grand illumination of the whole city, was

still more striking and imposing, attended by a concert of the finest music, which, repeated from a thousand gondolas, was heard far over the bosom of the Adriatic. First came two beautiful pages, bearing two large waxen torches; next, the champion of the company of the Calza, followed by two other pages, also with torches, and men at arms, with their squires and grooms. Secondly, came the grand standard, which appeared on fire with the splendour of its ornaments, and a person with a most exquisitely wrought statue, borne in a large vase of gold and silver, richly enchased, and glowing with the brightest colours. Thirdly, appeared the golden plate bearers, with every species of imitative confectionary, followed by a long line of attendants, the meanest of whom bore satin suits, gold bracelets, and large gold chains about their necks. Each of the members was attended, as near as I can recollect, by a train of six hundred followers, so that before the whole party had arrived, in succession, at the great council-hall, where the banquet was to be held, and where they found all the most bright and beautiful ladies of the city awaiting their arrival, whose splendid ornaments cast around them artificial day, the chief part of the night was already consumed. But why should I attempt to describe the convivial

scenes which there took place? scenes with which too many of my hearers are familiar to require the feeble delineation of my hand. Suffice it to observe, that ere the joyous guests had yet ceased to celebrate their convivial rites, the sun had been watching them many hours out of the east, when the music growing fainter and fainter, as the late nimble hands and feet beat time to its flagging mirth; and the richly painted floors being strewed with the spoils of stormed castles, wounded knights, and a thousand artificial relics of a miniature world in ruins, the revel rout became desirous of adjourning the further continuation of their mysteries to another carnival, which my lovely audience must be aware will soon be here. Yet we cannot flatter ourselves that it will dispense to the happy people of Venice half the amusement which the late season, a period that well deserves to be better commemorated, afforded to us all.

PART I. NOVELLA XCVI.

AT the time when the Marquess of Pescara was governor in the Milanese, there lived two gentlemen, of the respective names of Raffaello Chiecaro and Antonio Capputo, who had obtained from the senate the use of some public stoves, which, merely paying a small annual tax, made them very large returns, consuming only half the usual proportion of fuel. Now, near the piazza of San Stefano resided a certain retainer to the court of King Philip, a man of a free and liberal turn of mind, very generally esteemed by his acquaintance. How he first became intimate with Signor Chiecaro, I am at a loss to state; but certain it is, that he was frequently seen beguiling his hours at the house of that wily Genoese. The latter, desirous one day of trying how far he could play upon the courtier's credulity, observed to him: "Do you see this sonnet, my dear signor? if you please, I will teach you a very curious art. Read it; it is Petrarch's, and begins, you see,

" Rotta è l'alta colonna, e 'l verde Lauro," &c.

"Now, strange as you may think it, I will shew you a different sonnet under this, beginning :

‘ *Aimè il bel viso, aimè il soave sguardo.*’

“Nay, I defy you, that is impossible,” cried his friend, “or, if it be possible, pray let me learn quickly how it may be done.” With an air of importance the Genoese put his hand into his pocket, and took out a small flagon, into which he dipped a bit of cotton, and touched the letters of the first sonnet, which quickly made way for those of the second. To the eyes of his companion the whole of this appeared little less than a miracle: he declared in his excessive admiration, that it was a secret worthy the possession of the greatest princes in the world. “Yet it is yours for all that,” replied the Genoese, “and when you wish to write what is not meant for every eye, you have only to dissolve so much Roman vitriol in a drop of fresh water, and take a virgin quill never yet contaminated with ink, and write what you please. The moment it is dry, the writing will disappear; and having brought this to perfection, you will next prepare the following kind of ink: Take a handful of wheat straw, set it on fire, but look well to your house, by clapping a large extinguisher upon it before it be well burnt out. The residue will be a fine charcoal, which you will please to boil in the specified quantity of white wine, which will give you the ink required, to write upon any other subject in the same letter,

that you may think proper, the former inscription lying concealed. When you wish this last to appear, take some Istrian galls, pounded in acquavitæ, and having thus extracted their virtue, dip into it a piece of cotton, pass it lightly over the page, and the letter you want will appear." Here the Genoese ceased, and so delighted was the silly courtier with the secret, that he would willingly have bestowed upon him any reward he had asked. But the time was not yet come, and having received it gratuitously, our hero could only evince his warm gratitude for the gift. Having gone thus far, Signor Chiecaro, elated at his success, touched upon a variety of other topics ; among which, after inviting his friend to take the fresh air in his garden, he put the following question : " Pray, my dear signor, have you any room in your house with a close furnace that would retain the heat ?"—" Indeed I have," said the other, " and I will convince you of it directly." So introducing our Genoese into the place, who expressed himself perfectly satisfied with it, the latter again inquired, " Have you such a thing as a small cauldron in the house ?" " Yes, I have," was the reply. " Well, let it be broken then into pieces of about four fingers breadth, and let them be well heated over a huge charcoal fire. You will then

cool them as I shall point out to you. Take half a flask of strong vinegar, throw into it a good handful of salt, and as much pulverized tartar, and then suddenly quench the fiery metal in it by a speedy, deep, and satisfactory immersion. Repeat this five or six times over, by which the plates will be fully prepared for the ensuing process; the contrast between heat and cold being every thing upon which we have to depend. These experiments will find you sufficient employment until the morrow, when I will return, and acquaint you with the grand processes I have in view; only let the whole be conducted with the utmost secrecy, and no one touch the key of the apartment but yourself."

Flattering himself with the possession of some yet more valuable secrets, our simple hero promised to obey him in every thing; and, accordingly, the next morning exhibited the result of his labours to his view. Commending him very highly, the wily Genoese now said: "Truly, I believe, you will never be at a loss how to proceed." "I believe so too," said our conceited gentleman, to the no small amusement of the other, "for you see what I have done." "Next then," added his friend, "you must cut up the metal into small bits, weigh out of it three ounces, and melt it down in a crucible until it becomes liquid.

Into this throw, leaf by leaf, the herb which I now give you ;” taking about fifty plantain stalks out of his handkerchief: “ Do you know what it is ?” “ Oh, yes, there is plenty of it growing in my meadow just by,” said our hero. “ You are a fortunate man, then,” rejoined his friend. “ You must throw it into the melted copper, and leave it to cool in the crucible, watching it frequently, till I come again.” “ I will take care to do so,” said our hero, and proceeded forthwith to business. His next object was to gather as much of the plantain root as he could possibly find, to give the proper tinge, as he was told, to the metal, and he proceeded to weigh out, and note down the various proportions with a piece of charcoal upon the wall. Being quite ignorant, however, of the process of fusing, of the proper degree of heat, and the best mode of confining it in the crucible, he placed it on a large heap of charcoal, and set to work with a little pair of bellows, about as powerful as a lady’s fan, to blow it into a flame. When he thought it began to melt, he opened the crucible, and exposing it to the air, the metal became as hard and cold as before. Repeating the same experiment until he was quite weary, and half roasted alive before the fire, to his infinite delight he saw it begin to melt, and threw in the plantain leaves as directed.

Then, no longer able to stand, and covered with dust and smoke, he lay down in a profuse perspiration, awaiting the arrival of his arch deceiver, who approved of every thing he had done, and next advised him to go and consult some chemists as to the value of his products, and learn how much they would give him the ounce. Believing he should soon penetrate into some greater secrets, faint and weary as he was, our hero hastily seized his cloak and sword, and ran as fast as his strength permitted to the shop of a certain M. Ercole, an assayer, and found him just as he was going to supper. Earnestly entreating him to put it to the test upon the spot, though the assayer begged hard for a little time, he was at length prevailed upon to try a small piece of the new metal over the fire, to which he added a few bits of lead. Soon after, he declared, on examining the crucible, that he had detected several grains of gold, and that he was prepared to offer him two crowns and a half per ounce for such a product. Being well aware he had not made use of any gold, our experimentalist upon this observed : " But you are very much deceived, friend Ercole, in supposing there is any gold in the case ; I did not put a single fraction of a grain in it." " Surely," said the assayer, " you will allow me to believe my own eyes ; here is the gold, and you are

one of the most fortunate men in the world, if you really did not put any gold in it." Hearing these words, the poor gentleman was overpowered with joy, and beseeching him to make a fresh trial, which succeeded equally well with the former, he assured his friend, the assayer, that he should be glad to let him have the whole of the metal on the terms he had mentioned. The assayer was extremely anxious to learn the exact process he had observed in fusing it, which our hero, however, with an air of infinite importance, tried to evade, and at length flatly refused to make him acquainted with the secret. Then, promising to bring fresh samples very soon, he retired and went to rest, though quite unable to close his eyes on account of the multitude of castles in the air, that ceased not to haunt his imagination. His next meeting with his friend the Genoese was a very joyous one. He informed him, with tears of gratitude, of the grand test, and the complete success of his experiments. "Then I am now satisfied," returned the Genoese, "for I perceive you are quite equal to conduct the whole process without my farther assistance. Indeed, your facility and skill are truly astonishing; and if you still indulge the least doubt of your own ability, pray mention it!" "Nay," replied his friend, "I have none; I think I stand in need of no

farther directions : and I have only to express my gratitude for the ample instructions you have already given me. Only acquaint me in what manner I can at all requite you, for I assure you, I shall think nothing too great for the noble secrets you have confided in me." " Say no more," said the Genoese, " I have only to entreat that you will value the secret for my sake, and unfold it to no one."

Unable to make any adequate return to this kind and courteous language, our hero could only press his friend's hand in silence, who, embracing him tenderly, took his departure. Thus fancying himself in full possession of unlimited wealth, he began to calculate the different sums which he intended to bestow upon his friends and relatives, saying to himself as he proceeded, " Yes, I will purchase the castle for Pietro ; my good Paolo shall have an estate now, but Giovanni must have the marquisate. Thanks, great thanks to the Almighty, I shall at length have a little money in my pocket, in addition to his majesty's pension, which I can throw about on all sides as I please. My sole fear is, that the money-market will not be able to supply me fast enough for my precious metal, though I dispose of it in all parts of the world." Then after revolving the subject deeply in his mind, he resolved to form a complete establish-

ment, for the manufacture of the precious article, hiring a number of artificers to assist him in the business, and to collect a quantity of plantain roots, wherever they were known to grow. These he stored up by fifty and a hundred loads at a time, until he had completely ransacked the country for many miles round. He employed all the boys and women he could find, whom he supplied with baskets to bring the plantains to his house in such quantities as to excite the curiosity and wonder of all the neighbourhood.

Inquisitive to learn the nature of such proceedings, his wife frequently applied to him for an explanation, but always in vain, being told to attend to her household affairs, as he was fully competent to manage his own. When he had made his final preparations, his friend, the Genoese, one day came to him, with a countenance full of anxiety, and accosted him thus: "I wish, from my very soul, I had never undertaken this speculation from the senate, with all its pretended privileges: a curse upon all such furnaces, I am heartily sick of the job."—"My dear Raffaello," cried our hero, "what is it that has thus disturbed you?" "What is it?" replied the wily Genoese; why, it is this: I wish to go and leave this business with which our senate has saddled me, (and yet I am compelled to keep to my engage-

ment,) and to set out immediately for Genoa. Now I am come to beg you will please to lend me an hundred ducats until my return, which I shall take as a particular favour." "Oh, certainly," said our hero, and immediately went out, and returned with a bag of gold, saying, "help yourself, my dear friend, and take as many as you please; for I owe you more, far more than any thing I can repay. Indeed, I wish you would deign to put my gratitude to a severer test; I have friends who will join me in assisting you to a much larger amount." "I thank you," said the Genoese, "I will only take this sum at present; it is quite sufficient for the object I have in view." Then quietly pocketing the money, he took his departure, leaving our poor hero to carry on his operations alone. He had already expended more than a thousand crowns in the purchase of some buildings from Angelo Coiro, near Monte Brianza, admirably situated, as he imagined, for the purpose of carrying on his extensive business. Hither were conveyed the materials of his new trade, loads of charcoal and plantain, with crucibles, brass cauldrons, and silver plate; believing he was the first man who could boast of having set up a grand manufactory of gold. And here, shutting himself up, he superintended his enormous furnace, stripping himself to the skin, in

order the better to heat his crucibles, and blowing with all his might to produce the fusion of his metals. Great was the fire, and great his toil and torture, though not equal to his desire of beholding the gold. Three hours incessantly he blew and blew, trying different kinds of processes, and different sized vessels, without the least effect. The strong heat, and the working of the bellows together, began at length to prove quite too much for his strength, while he stood in a violent perspiration from head to foot, without being any nearer the accomplishment of his task. The rest of his fires were in the same predicament, not the least fusion of the metals appearing, and the whole of his establishment, servants and assistants, were as weary and exhausted as himself. Eight hours had now elapsed, when the place becoming heated like one immense stove, and our poor hero having twice fainted away, he was borne home by his people, who refused any longer to bear the brunt of the day. His wife, who had observed a remarkable change in him of late, an unaccountable elevation and inequality of spirits, wild at times, and at times depressed, conceived no time was to be lost. Seeing him then brought home in the condition we have described, his face fiery, and his clothes covered with foam and dust, crying out at the same time loudly for drink, she compas-

sionately ran towards him, and accosted him thus :
“ What can be the reason, my dear, of your strange conduct, shutting yourself up day and night, in a place too hot for a salamander ? Would to heaven that that old wretch of a Genoese had broken his neck before you saw him ! would that the great demon had caught him in his clutches ! would that you had not been such a fool, my dear, as to have listened to him ! ” Hearing himself thus tenderly apostrophized by his wife, who presumed to intermeddle in things that he thought did not concern her, the poor man, impelled by rage and disappointment, lent her two hearty cuffs on the side of her head, which somewhat checked the flow of her tenderness. Then out of mere spite, instead of going to repose as he ought to have done, he got up, and ran to his friend the assayer’s, to put his folly to a further test, with the same unhappy result as before. His final hopes now rested upon the return of the arch villain Chiecaro to put him into the right way again ; but after bearing the sickness of hope deferred with great fortitude, during many weeks, he bethought him of following the Genoese, though he had no directions how to find him. First, however, he essayed the effect of sending letters and special messengers in all directions, without hearing the least tidings of him. His own per-

sonal exertions proved equally fruitless ; and in this state of affairs, lost in a world of chimeras, he passed his unhappy time till Christmas. About that time happening one day to be in company, he heard a party of gentlemen conversing, one of whom observed, " If you can do this, you will render me a great service ; for a certain speculation, by which I hoped to become richer than the Grand Turk, has ended in smoke. An old villain of a Genoese, whom God confound, has emptied my pockets of all my ready cash, though he seemed to come, like Jupiter, in a golden shower."—" And how," replied his friend, " did he inveigle you? What was the trick?"—" What was the trick, indeed? you shall hear! He wanted to teach me how to make gold, and I, like a simple one who loves simplicity, wished to learn. For this purpose I advanced three hundred gold crowns, deposited in the hands of Luca Contile."—" Did you speak of gold crowns?" cried our hero, no longer able to repress his curiosity, " and of a Genoese? for pity's sake, dear captain, go on." This the captain did, and mutual explanations and condolences then took place. The only fact which they could clearly ascertain, was, that he had succeeded in the same manner in cheating them all; that he was gone, and no longer to be found. After conversing for some

time together upon the subject, and considering in what way the losses they had suffered might best be repaired, they arrived at the conclusion, that the most effectual plan would be, to avail themselves of the same means as had been practised by the Genoese, whenever they had the good fortune to meet with any friend as simple as they had themselves been. Somewhat consoled with having hit upon this ingenious method of reimbursing themselves, they laughed heartily, and took leave.

PART II. NOV. XI.

UPON the eve of the regal and splendid nuptials about to be solemnized between the Duke Guglielmo and the Princess Eleonora of Austria, the Marquess Pescara, then governor over the Milanese, despatched the Cavalier Lione Aretino, a celebrated sculptor, to direct the preparations, in honour of the occasion, at Mantua. After a number of ingenious plans had been proposed and rejected, it was finally agreed among persons of the finest taste and ability, to select that of the "Arch of Loyal Lovers," so well described by Amadis of Gaul, to be represented with the richest embellishments. With this view an admirable site was first pitched upon; one of the most beautiful, perhaps, ever chosen for the celebration of so joyous a festival. Several hundreds of people were immediately engaged, besides twenty directors, brought by Aretino from Milan, well versed in similar matters, and wholly devoted to the work. In vain should we attempt to describe the vast preparations, the grand statues, the beautiful pictures, the splendid illuminations hung in the air, and all the other miraculous exhibitions calculated to surprise the spec-

tator. Enough to state, they were declared by all to be equal to any thing before exhibited by the greatest monarch upon earth. Both Tuscan and Latin verses were written for the occasion by that divine wit Luca Contile; who did not disdain, also, to afford his assistance to the supreme artist, Aretino, wherever it might be most wanted. Yet both being of themselves unequal to achieve the grand objects they had in view, they wrote to the Marquess at Milan, entreating him to send them one of the Malespini, their intimate friend, and a faithful servant of King Philip. The marquess, ever intent upon the duke's interests, readily complied with their request, declaring that they could not have hit upon a more skilful hand, he having had a vast experience in the celebration of festivals of every kind in Milan. Despatching Malespini, therefore, post to Mantua, he was met by a deputation of merry gentlemen, who conducted him to the scene of action with loud applause. After their witty compliments were over, he directly set his head to work, as it was his duty, to devise how he might best add to the splendour and attraction of the scenery, and so highly did the others approve of his opinions, that they resolved to commit the sole charge of the infernal regions, one of the very highest trust, to his hands. It was indeed of a most de-

licate nature, the whole of the fireworks being confined to this spot ; so that he looked somewhat rueful in entering upon his new province, though he heartily devoted himself to the task for the poor cavalier's sake, overburdened as he was with the infinite variety of his duties. Every thing was now conducted with the greatest diligence and despatch, Malespini awakening a spirit of emulation among his devils, which communicated itself to the other artists. Even the duke himself occasionally inspected the works, though it was a general rule, in order not to impede their progress, to admit no company except such as he introduced. For two of the gentlemen were always obliged to attend the duke, for the purpose of explaining every thing ; and so very irksome had this practice become, that the cavalier Aretino threw the whole burthen of it upon poor Malespini's shoulders. He had soon the wit, however, to take refuge in the lowest depths of his own infernal domain, rather than expose himself to the eternal questions of the foolish courtiers, and there he always lay hid, until the lords and ladies were gone.

The governor having already arrived at Mantua, and taken possession of the king's palace, likewise visited the works, anxious to bring them to a speedy termination, as the royal visitors had nearly all ar-

rived. But observing that there was a deficiency of glass in giving a fine reflection to the whole, Malespini was commissioned to go to Milan with large orders, which ought to have been already executed, and not to return without fulfilling them. These he despatched with such celerity, returning two days before the festival, that he won the applause of all the lords and princes present; not having broken a single chandelier by the way. Malespini, returning to his infernal labours, inspired such a degree of activity into his laziest imps, as to extort the applause of all. Yet some there were, mightily afraid of burning their fingers with the work, whenever his back, or that of the cavalier, was turned upon them. These he instigated by blows, and moreover importuned the duke to let the same plan be adopted in his regions above, as in those underneath. This likewise greatly expedited the business towards the last; for Aretino had just before been seized with such a fit of desperation, that he threatened to assassinate two of the idlest, and throw up the whole concern, as a hopeless job. So they got an order from the duke, for the artificers to work all night long, encouraging and scourging them by turns the whole of the time. By these means the magnificent pile seemed to start into sudden existence, and was

considered a miracle by the people. For the cavalier had now succeeded in drawing off the water from the lake, into a sort of canal, before the enchanted island, so that no one could approach it but by the bridge, where the cavaliers were to arrive, after having engaged in battle, and come off victors, against the garrison. The cavaliers, namely, the Marquis Pescara, Don Giovanni d'Avalos his brother, and Don Giorgio Mariquez, were to be led on by two Amazons towards the canal, over which a small wooden bridge projected, by which they were to pass, when it became immediately submerged as before. Then they arrived under the Arch of the Loyal Lovers, over which a statue of bronze appeared, with a trumpet in her hand, to welcome the approach of the conqueror, while a shower of flowers fell upon his head ; until just as he passed under a great vault, he was suddenly assaulted by a number of naked weapons, and a huge hand was stretched forth, which dragged him into the enchanted cave of Apollidone and Grimanessa, where he remained a prisoner. The cavalier being thus worsted, was next to be conducted by the two Amazons to the place where the bridge had disappeared ; and the statue was seen venting fire and flame out of the trumpet. He was then to be seized by a host of devils, and thrown into the Inferno. It

required a considerable effort of skill to compel the bridge to stay under water, which was at length, however, devised by the cavalier, applying some ropes and iron bands in such a way as to make it rise and fall at pleasure. Requiring, after this feat, some little repose, he begged Malespini to direct the remainder of the work, and to take particular care that no one meddled with the bridge; which might destroy the machinery and break it into a thousand pieces. Having taken upon himself the duty of a sentinel, Malespini desired him to make his mind easy, and get a little rest, for the whole was in safe hands. Then brandishing a huge stick, he went among the artificers, crying as he smote the more idle among them: "Courage, courage, my dear brothers; let us employ the little time that remains to some purpose!" Being thus engaged, about two hours before midnight torch-lights were observed flashing in the theatre, followed by a large train of lords and princes. Malespini being aware of them at a distance, in order to avoid the reiterated persecutions to which he had formerly been subjected, ran and hid himself within his Inferno, in hopes they might the sooner take their leave. The company then burst in upon him, consisting of the Cardinal Madruccio, followed by various prelates, the dukes of Parma and of Mantua, the

marquess Pescara, with numerous counts and cavaliers. After inspecting the whole place, they proceeded to the intended field of battle, wide and capacious, and extremely well laid out. Here the duke Guglielmo with a few of his friends, stopping till the rest of the party had passed on, was desirous of showing them the secret bridge. For this purpose he took hold of one of the ropes by which it was bound, and giving it a pretty smart jerk, and it happening to be the wrong one, the whole machinery broke with a tremendous crash, and the bridge rose up, dashing the water abroad on all sides. Malespini hearing the terrific sound, hastily ran towards the spot, and beholding the bridge out of the water, and the machinery that had employed so many painful hours broken into pieces, which his friend too had just committed to his care, felt such a sudden emotion of anger, that seeing the duke, a little hunchbacked man, with whose person he was unacquainted, standing near, and taking him for the prelate's clerk not far from him, he lent him several pretty severe blows upon the shoulders, with the weapon he held in his hand: "Villain of a hunchback!" he cried, "I feel the greatest inclination to knock your brains out;" which he might, perhaps, have done, but for the speedy interference of those around him. The duke,

conscious of the mischief he had committed, and seeing him in such a furious passion, replied not a word ; while Malespini, raving and swearing, declared he had not done with him yet, and hastened as fast as possible to accuse the little hunchback before the marquess. “ There he is,” he cried, as the duke with his few companions appeared. “ See, my lord, what sort of people you permit to visit our works ! Oh, my lord, he has broken the beautiful bridge, the Bridge of the Loyal Lovers, which was to grace the noble duke’s espousals ! It is entirely broken !” In the mean while, all the people present, on the appearance of the duke, made their obeisance ; when poor Malespini, beginning to suspect that all was not right, intently eyed the little hunchback, whose head he had broken. But when the truth burst upon him, he grew pale and mute, while the blood seemed to stagnate in his veins : for he still held the fatal cudgel in his hands, as he beheld the marquess and other princes paying homage to the duke. Though still smarting a little, the duke could not help laughing at the pitiable appearance of his accuser ; and addressing himself to the noblemen, he said : “ I think I ought to be the accuser here : that gentleman has to answer for an assault ; and truly, my lords, I was afraid he was going to flay me alive ; it is wonderful how I escaped

out of his hands." Then turning towards the trembling Malespini, he continued: "Come, friend, I believe we must both give and take; I have done you a terrible injury, and you have had your revenge." "Oh! my lord duke," stammered out the unhappy gentleman; "Oh! my lord, may I presume your excellency will ever forgive me? Your excellency must be informed that I had never the honour of being acquainted with your person, or this dreadful affair could not have happened: attribute it then only to my regard for your excellency's interests." "I do," replied the duke, "for you have given me a very sensible proof of it, and I feel it, as I believe I ought to do, for meddling where I had no business:" and upon this, he shrugged his shoulders, and shook hands with Malespini, while the whole palace rang with mingled laughter and applause. Still Malespini was ill at ease; for he had now to encounter the reproaches of Aretino, who seemed, however, somewhat consoled at the revenge he had taken, which he thought was not at all too much; though they both wore a very lugubrious face upon the occasion. Their next business was, if possible, to repair the damage; which, though great, turned out not to be irreparable. For Malespini, having now dealt with his devils, gave his assistance to the unhappy Are-

tino, until the entire work was restored; and the day of the festival arrived.

The valiant cavaliers now engaged on both sides with the utmost valour, fighting during the greater part of the night by torch-light, and displaying all the terrors of a mock heroic battle and storm by night. The Marquess Pescara had already stretched three heroes on the ground, while a fourth, an unfortunate gentleman of Ferrara, was seized and dragged by the devils into Malespini's hell, where he was put to all kinds of tortures, till the place resounded with his cries. Another was thrown headlong down a tremendous precipice, to the terror of all the spectators, who imagined he must have infallibly broken his neck; but Pluto had the kindness to receive him upon a bed of feathers, instead of flames. In the Inferno were exhibited all those extraordinary embellishments with which it is peopled by the poets; —Ixion's wheel, the stone of Sisyphus, Tantalus with his apples, the vulture of the fire-stealer, Cerberus with his three heads, and a variety of other terrific objects. Old Charon was extremely busy with his souls, arrayed in every kind of form and dress, with fires and furies in abundance, to greet their arrival. One of the principal figures was that of Lodovico Gonzaga, brother to the duke, representing a Cava-

lier of the Sun, arrayed in white velvet, trimmed with rays of fire; and wearing a band of crimson silk, lined with gold, saturated with inflammable liquids. Issuing in this dress out of a cave, he set fire to the belt, and instantly appeared enveloped in flames; for him alone being reserved the glory of giving freedom to the captives, enchanted in the den of Apollidone and Grimanessa, an exploit that crowned the wonders of the scene. But a still more strange and serious accident occurred to Malespini than to any of the enchanted persons present. For he had ordered a choice selection of wines to be in readiness, to refresh the actors and their assistants. Now some of these were inadvertently placed among some bottles of very fine *aqua vitæ*, mixed with camphor and other ingredients, calculated to make a fine display of fireworks, which the devils were to spout out of their mouths and their eyes, without injuring any one. It happened that Charon in his frequent voyages, was entrusted with a quantity of rich dresses and ornaments, esteemed of much more value than the souls whom they adorned, for the better protection of which some of the duke's guards had been appointed. Observing the number of flasks, and supposing them filled with good wine, as, in truth, many of them were, they took an opportunity, as soon as possible, of

emptying them of their contents. Just then poor Malespini came wandering by, with scorched eyebrows, inflamed cheeks, and with little of his mustachios remaining, faint and weary "with excess of toil," and dying of thirst. Imagining that his part was nearly played, and the festival almost over, he seized upon one of these fatal flasks, and without farther consideration, swallowed a great part of it at a single draught. But finding it to be pure *aqua vitæ*, he stopped about half way; for he had yet the task of arraying a huge porter in a demon's habiliments, who was to bear in his hand a large machine, made of fine linen, steeped in spirits, which he was afterwards to set on fire, and it therefore behoved him to husband his strength. In this blaze the demon was to run round the top of a large tower in the city of Pluto, and to precipitate himself thence into the depths of the Inferno; but, seized with a sudden qualm on beholding the place, and hearing the noise and confusion of demons below, which he imagined too nearly resembled the reality, no persuasions or threats could prevail upon him to venture upon the perilous leap. Malespini, determined not to bate a jot of what appertained to his duty on the occasion, when he found that neither force nor entreaties availed, gave him a sound cuff on the side of the

head, and resolving not to disappoint the spectators, seized upon his devil's dress, arrayed himself in it, took the blazing machine, and ran with the utmost speed round the great tower; thence, throwing his blazing emblems before him, with the spirit of a real demon, he took a flying leap in pursuit of them; thanks to the quantity of brandy he had swallowed, which considerably diminished the height of the tower. Almost every one who beheld him, and even Aretino himself, astonished at the sight, and believing it to be the porter, pronounced him a dead man; but thanks again, perhaps, to the brandy, our hero sustained no kind of harm. Yet this formed only a part of the grand exhibitions of the evening, the whole of which it would be an idle attempt to describe. The battle of the cavaliers, the enchanted bridge, and the disenchantment of the lovers, would each require a separate story, while the jousts and games that followed, attended by the flower of beauty and the pride of chivalry of all Italy, gave a joyous termination to those happy nuptials, from which no one returned home without some proofs of the munificence of the duke.

PART II. NOVELLA LXI.

MANY years ago, there dwelt in the city of Ainalto, a certain merchant, who, among his other speculations, was unlucky enough to venture in the matrimonial lottery, and to draw a very bold and artful woman for his wife. Now his business frequently leading him to a distance from home, the lady was at full liberty to indulge "her love of pleasure and her love of sway," neglecting no opportunity of domineering over her household, and coquetting with the prettiest young fellows she could find. One of these at length became so particular a favourite, as to excite the notice of one of the merchant's neighbours, who often amused himself with counting the number of visits paid to her by her gentle cavalier, during the husband's absence. He next resolved to add to his amusement by acquainting the poor gentleman with his suspicions, who, expressing all the surprise and concern possible upon the occasion, thanked his friend for his advice, observing that he would take care to provide a remedy. And in order to convince himself the more effectually of what he did not in the least wish to know, he fixed to return suddenly to his own house

the very first night he should be supposed to be at a distance. So, to be as good as his word, he feigned a pretty long journey, but retracing his steps towards evening, he went straight to his friend's house, situated just opposite his own, whence he could easily descry the motions of his enemy, if such indeed were lurking about his premises that night. His friend, who had stationed himself at his side, when he was just on the point of dropping to sleep, about midnight, was suddenly roused by an exclamation of horror from the poor merchant, and looking out of the window, beheld the lover standing at his usual station. The door not being immediately opened, the latter took a few turns before the house with an easy and confident air, by no means an auspicious sign in the eyes of our jealous spectator, who pronounced himself to be a very unhappy man. With his friend's advice, therefore, he resolved to employ the following stratagem. After disguising himself as well as he could, he very quietly stepped down stairs, and joining the gentleman upon the terrace, he accosted him in a low tone as follows : " My mistress, signor, knows very well who it is, and has sent me to say, that, fearing her husband's return, she wishes me to introduce you some other way into the house, lest any one should observe you walking before the door."

Signor Drudo, believing him of course one of the lady's domestics, consented to accompany him, and upon approaching another entrance, the husband took a key from his pocket, and led the unconscious lover up a back staircase, into a room where lay a huge chest. "My mistress begs me to conceal you a few moments in this trunk, signor, until my foolish master goes; when you may depend that she will not delay a moment in coming for you herself, and will give you the best entertainment that the house can afford. So jump in, signor; plenty of room and plenty of air; and you will not have to wait many minutes." Accordingly, with a becoming deference for the lady's orders, the bold youth stepped in, and the husband locking him fast, put the key into his pocket, and hastened back again to the house of his friend. "He is caught," he cried; "the rat is fast in the trap; what will be the best way, think you, of disposing of him?" This soon became a very general question, all his friends and relations being summoned to decide upon it, especially the female portion, who were quite delighted to hear the tidings, having long owed the merchant's wife a grudge, for the haughtiness and intolerance of her manners. To add to the publicity of the affair, the lady's parents were roused from their beds in the middle of

the night, and requested to attend; and even her brothers and sisters, and cousins from the country, were not spared upon the occasion: all being assembled in council, to strike the souls of the guilty pair with tenfold awe, confusion, and despair. With this charitable view, the whole procession directed their steps towards the house of their victims, while in the mean time the unhappy lover had been rather anxiously awaiting the arrival of his beloved, who on her part was looking as anxiously out of the windows, wondering what could possibly delay him so long, as he was accustomed to anticipate the hour. Hearing footsteps passing in all directions, but none approaching near, the poor lover, already half stifled, began to kick and cry out with all his strength, in which he was successful enough to attract the lady's ear in the next apartment, who inquired in a great fright what it was. "It is I, my dear soul," returned a feeble voice, "I am just dead; I wonder you can be so cruel as to keep me here." "Why, how did you get there, in the name of all the saints? it is none of my doing, I am sure." "I do not know," said the voice, "but your servant put me here by your orders, lest your husband should see me." "Oh, Lord! help me, then," she cried, "I see how it all is; it is my husband's doing. It is all

discovered. What, in the name of heaven, shall we do?" "Let me out, by all means," cried the voice, "unless you wish to see me perish." "Oh! dear, but my husband has got the key, and it is impossible to break it open; besides, he would murder me if I did." "Look for another key, then," said the voice. "That is a good thought; so I will," said the lady; and directing her search very effectually, she hit upon the right key, and was happy enough to liberate her lover.

Once free, after drawing many deep sighs, not for love, but to recover his breathing, he was about to take his leave of the lady, and secure his escape while there was yet time, when, seizing him half frantic in her arms, she conjured him not to abandon her alone to death and to dishonour. "But what can be done?" cried he, "how can you contrive to escape?"—"Why," said she, "if we could put somebody else into the trunk, there might be some excuse for letting you out."—"True," said her lover, "but who can we find to take my place, so that I may go, for it is quite time?"—"Now I think of it," returned the lady, "there is a young ass in the stable, if you would assist me to get it here, and shut it up in the box."—"Certainly I will do that," replied the lover, though not much flattered at the idea of his succes-

sor, "I will do that ; and let us go about it quickly." So having achieved this feat, and kissed his fair deliverer tenderly, he ran out of the house ; while the lady, having locked up the little donkey, very quietly went to rest. Ere long, however, she was roused by a tremendous noise at the door ; all the relations she had in the world were arrived, and she went down stairs to welcome them herself. " Now," cried the enraged husband, rushing in, followed by the whole troop, " I will convince you of the truth of all I have said ; go in, go in, and you shall take this vile daughter of yours home with you, after we have despatched her wretched paramour before her face." This they one and all promised him to do, proceeding with lighted torches and drawn swords to the scene of action, and followed at a convenient distance by the women, extremely curious to behold the termination of the tragedy. The lady expressing the utmost astonishment at these proceedings, and the strange reception she met with on all hands, her husband, without deigning to reply, lent her a pretty severe box on the ear, a species of compliment which was as eagerly returned. " Mind whom you have to deal with, and what you say," exclaimed the insulted fair one ; " do you think I will be thus treated in the presence of my parents ?"—" Oh, thou vile, abandoned

woman !" he returned, " what will you say when I shew them your wicked paramour, whom we are going to kill before your face ;" and upon this a volley of abuse was launched on her from all sides ; not a single one of her friends or relatives joining their voice to hers. " Yes ; go on, go on," she cried, " call me by all the horrid names you please ; for I have the satisfaction of knowing that you all lie in your throats ; yes, you do, you do ; or else you are all stark mad : my husband must have driven you out of your wits."—" Let us inquire of this chest," retorted he ; " let us hear what that will say."—" Oh villain !" cried his wife, " you know I never had the key in my life, and whoever you may have hidden there, I swear I have never had any thing to say to him in all my life, and I trust that heaven will help me, and make my innocence manifest to the world. Yes, and heaven will interfere, for it is all a vile conspiracy to rob a poor inoffensive and injured woman of her chief crown and jewel, her innocence and honour !"

" Come, no whining," cried her husband, " I have long known your practices ; but I hardly thought that he could have made such a complete hypocrite of you : he seems to have taught you to some purpose indeed ! Your time is at length come. I will give such proofs of your depravity ! Come along,

I am going to open the box. But first, my good friends, have your weapons ready, and draw closer round. Strike sure, and take good care he does not escape ; for I can assure you he is a fierce and powerful fellow.”—“ Never fear,” they all cried at once ; “ we will do his business ; I think we are a match for him ;” and wrapping their mantles around them, and brandishing their swords, they entreated him to proceed. One of them even cried, in an insulting tone, “ Have you confessed yourself, villain ? for you are likely to have no other priests to officiate than ourselves.” As the jealous husband was unlocking the trunk, his mother and sisters turned their heads aside, as if desirous of shunning the horrid sight, even the shedding of a wicked adulterer’s blood.

With hands and eyes intent upon the approaching slaughter, the men of vengeance stood ; the box opened, and the ass, uneasy at having been so long confined, got upon his legs, and the better to take his breath, brayed a long and discordant welcome to his friends. Such was the sudden shock he gave them, that some of the spectators fainted ; the more fortunate ran away, and great was the terror and confusion before order could be restored. The more devout cried out that it was a miracle sent to prove the innocence of the lady, and the wicked design of

injuring her reputation ; so that with one accord changing the object of their resentment, they began to revile the poor merchant, and accuse him of the most flagitious conduct in attempting to ruin the reputation of his own wife : indeed, had he not quickly sought refuge elsewhere, the lady's brothers would have consigned him to the fate they had prepared for her lover. It was some time before he was again received into favour by the lady and her friends, nor was he ever afterwards known to make the least complaint, although the visits of the lover were so often renewed as to attract the notice of every body but himself.

Salbuccio Salbucci.

SALVUCCIO SALVUCCI.

FEW particulars are to be met with relating to the life and productions of the above author, one of Italy's most rare and scanty novelists. There exist only two of his stories, which are known to have been published ; though we are informed, that like many other of his contemporaries, he designed to present us with a greater number, the want of which, without some additional claims to superiority in point of quality, is not much to be regretted. Yet, though much inferior to some of his predecessors, he was sufficiently famous, about the period in which he wrote, to occupy a rank in the list of Italian writers of prose fiction. The earlier copies of his work have long since become extremely rare, though a very exact one is said to have formerly belonged to the Borromeo collection, taken from that of the original edition, published at Florence in 1591, which was recently preserved in the Vatican library at Rome. It likewise formed a portion of the collection of the late Alessandro Gregorio Capponi, in whose catalogue it may be found enumerated.

SALVUCCIO SALVUCCI.

ABOUT the year 1572, during the government of the viceroy of Naples, whose magnificence, whose clemency, and love of justice won the regard of all classes, there was a solemn festival held during carnival, given by his highness in honour of the numerous dukes and princes who then resorted to the city. Towards the conclusion of the banquet, the prince of Bisignan, whose agreeable and somewhat flattering manners placed him on very familiar terms with the viceroy, taking occasion to applaud his equal sway and his successful prosecution of delinquents, inquired whether he had then in custody any of a very notorious character who were shortly about to expiate their offences with their blood. The viceroy replied in the affirmative, observing, there were four of this description, who, the governor had just informed him, were kept in the strictest confinement, daily awaiting the signal of their doom. "Have you any objection," returned the prince, "to state the respective reasons of their imprisonment?" "None

in the world," was the reply; "the first is a doctor of laws, who by the falsification of certain deeds contrived to deprive another of his life and property; the second, a doctor of physic, who was bribed at a high rate to despatch one of his patients somewhat too speedily to the other world; the third, while commanding the fortress of Castello dell' Uovo, took the liberty of defrauding the soldiers of their pay, and was in actual treaty, gentlemen, to deliver up the place to the Turks. The last of this precious set, being entrusted with a large sum of money by various people, secured it for his own purposes, and became bankrupt, setting out from Naples for Constantinople, the grand receptacle for wretches of this description; but he had not the good fortune to get clear even of our coasts." "All these are indeed flagrant instances," observed the prince, "and deserving of the very severest visitation of the laws. For they may be considered as four of the leading professions in the world, those of the lawyer, the physician, the governor, and the merchant, established, as it were, for the benefit of the community, whereas these villains have converted the sources of existence into poison, and thus become guilty of the most atrocious and least excusable of crimes."

"It is true," replied the viceroy, "and since we

are assembled here for the purpose of amusing ourselves, let us in turn consider which of these professions ought to be esteemed the most effectual in the promotion of property, of honour, and of life. And we would first have the opinion of the Duke of Città Penna; then that of Atri; thirdly, of Amalfi; and last, but not least of all, that of our friend Somma. As supreme umpire in this matter, let us elect our prince Bisignan; he shall decide which of us judges best as to the utility of their respective callings. And in regard to the mischief they produce in the world, and their respective pre-eminence in evil, I should like the good prince of Salerno to put us right. And understand, friends, there must be no appeal from, and no sort of contradiction to this supreme jurisdiction of mine.”—“It is well,” exclaimed the Duke of Città Penna, “and as your highness has first requested my humble opinion on this high and important subject, I shall express myself frankly, without wishing to be understood to make particular allusion to any member of these said professions, and gladly referring the errors I may fall into, to the wisdom of such of you as will rectify them.” “That is well said,” interrupted the viceroy, “the question is quite general; we have nothing to do with individuals; they need not be afraid of us, so proceed cheerily with the

question!"—"I say, then," pursued the duke, "that keeping the '*lucidus ordo*,' of our argument in view, I mean first to put our lawyer to the bar, as he first made his appearance on the tapis. The rest of you may deal with his successors as you please; but I am determined to have a fling at him. For he is, to say the least of him, a two-edged sword, which can cut very sharply both ways, so much so, that not all the governors, merchants, or physicians in the world are to be in any way compared to him. Behold him pouring forth a tide of learned eloquence in defence of the life, the property, and the honour of some rogue, whom he brings off victorious. What is so rascally? Had it not been for him, the villain would have got his deserts. And let me add, that if the learned gentleman at once applies his ignorance, of which the world, and especially the world of lawyers, is very full, and his knowledge united, in doing mischief, how great is that mischief, no less to his client than to others, whose very lives it may concern, and whose property or honour are most frequently at stake: while the guilty themselves are often falsely convicted, either through their counsel's ignorance, or their wilful consent, insomuch that knowledge itself, in the hands of such wretches as these, may be com-

pared to a knife in the hands of a madman. In fact, they will often restore the stolen bacon, as it is said, into the kitchen of the thief, if he possess the dexterity to treat them to a slice, while the poor owner walks empty handed away."

The Duke of Città Penna here checking himself, he of Atri next took up the theme, proposing to deal as unceremoniously with the doctor of physic as his precursor had done with the man of law. "It is fit," he continued, "that we deal pretty roundly with a man who mostly prescribes doses of three several qualities to a poor sick wretch at a venture, trusting that so many opposite poisons may probably cancel each other, without destroying the patient along with them. It is at best a perilous business, in which so many materials, and so many false assurances to help them down, are to be swallowed. And for this reason physicians are in many places not to be met with; none, for instance, being found in the Isle of Giappone; and they were banished, in its ancient and best days, from the city of Rome. 'Physician, cure thyself,' is in every body's mouth, while they are well and in possession of their judgment; but as the latter declines with their health, they then send for him. 'Do you not perceive, O citizens,' cried a

wise Roman, ‘ that it is for conferring upon us the benefit of death, that they require payment !’ ‘ Our physician, moreover, mostly gives proof of skill in redeeming some vile felon from the jaws of Cerberus ; saving, probably, his life and property, both forfeited to the laws ; and by this process, against his own confession, he strives to justify his errors, by declaring such a wretch worthy of absolution. But though his prescriptions often agree excellently well with rogues, they have quite a different effect upon honest men ; and as many of us as henceforward allow ourselves to be carried off, either by ignorance or stratagem ; why, I say, it is our own fault.”

As he thus concluded, the Duke of Amalfi next prepared, with a cheerful countenance, to handle the merits of the commander, who, he observed, “ has very serious charge confided to him. In the field, or in the garrison, the lives of thousands are entrusted to his hands : their wealth, their honour, their all, depend upon the skill and probity with which he executes his task. But when he once begins to speculate, to declare a truce with his fidelity and honour, and to treat or to fight on his own bottom, as an author somewhere observes, he is very far from being an honest man. Neither friend nor foe can hold his

promise good, though he often swears on the faith of a loyal soldier ; and this must be sufficient, without other instances, to signify my opinion, whether you judge it right or wrong."

The Duke of Somma, being the fourth, had now to round off the period of their discourse, which he accomplished in a very polished and complete style. He declared " that the good and trust-worthy merchant was, after all, the surest means of conferring life, honour, and riches upon those who shewed themselves desirous, as most men were, of acquiring and adding to their worldly state and reputation ; as he supplied them upon credit with materials of every description on which to build their own fortunes, and when his bills became due, also to add to his. For the truth is, that ready money cannot always be paid down in hard coin, there being, according to an old saying, ' less honesty, sense, and money in the world, than people in general imagine.' But when the trader or the usurer, impelled by the wicked instigation of mammon and the devil, would by their accursed devices, vie with each other in obtaining the crown of unrighteousness, made of gold, they are not at all inferior to the lawyer, the physician, or the commander, in the art of depriving people of their

life, their reputation, or their property. There are too many instances occurring every day, more especially among a great trading people, who boast of the superior skill and valour of their mariners, of merchants announcing their failure to the world, for the mere purpose of appropriating the property of others, committing fraudulent acts of bankruptcy, and not unfrequently absconding with the money of their employers in their pockets. It is an old Spanish saying, ‘*Mercante mal arrivato carta viexa va buscando.*’ The false trader (I take it,) returns to his old trade; till having at length forfeited his reputation with his honesty, poverty follows in their place.

“ Now this same poverty being a sort of foot-cloth for all the world to rub their feet upon, soon becomes so strong and unwholesome, that though it were salted with all the virtues of the earth, it would infallibly smell; insomuch that its very professors, a numerous class, in order to avoid its influence, scruple not to commit the most unjust actions, at the risk of ending their days upon a scaffold. At last when they find there is really no other means of getting rid of a nuisance, situated not only very near, but actually within their dwellings, they prefer rather to leave their earthly tabernacles altogether, than bear its daily inconvenience; and thus boldly risk a final adventure upon

the sea of eternity. And this is the last argument I can think of to establish my position, that there is not a greater rascal on the face of the earth than a fraudulent merchant, such an one as our good viceroy has probably now in his possession among his other living curiosities."

The treatment of this villanous subject, and the able exposition of its enormities by our ducal orators, were greatly applauded by the rest of the company; yet the viceroy himself was perhaps the loudest in their praise. Turning towards the Prince of Bisignan, "To your highness," he continued, "I believe it next belongs, to give final judgment in this case, from which there must be no appeal, declaring which of the professional parties under consideration, is either the most useful or the most prejudicial to the world. And let their merits, in God's name, come first, for we have heard sufficient of their opposite qualities, I imagine, to serve us for some time." The prince, then, with all due form and ceremony, of which he was an excellent master, commenced his magisterial discourse. "Too grave and weighty I fear is the burden you have imposed upon my poor shoulders, though I shall endeavour to bear up under it as stoutly as I can. And the better to observe your injunctions, I shall here beg to introduce the

famous story, so beautifully told by Boccaccio, applied to one who, like me, had a very important matter in hand.

“ The father of a family once happened to be in possession of a certain extraordinary ring, which being left by will, had the power of conferring his whole property on whichever of his sons had the good fortune to wear it after his death, to the exclusion of the rest of his children. In this way it was handed down through several generations, until it fell to the lot of one, who had three sons, all of whom were acquainted with its excellent properties. Being perpetually teased by each of them for the succession, the old gentleman, to avoid their further importunities, sent for a celebrated goldsmith, whom he commissioned to make two more so exactly similar, that it became impossible to detect the counterfeit. He then severally presented each son with one of them, observing, that if he were wise, and wished to lead a quiet life, he would take care to say nothing about it to his brothers, but that after he was gone, he might act as he thought proper. Then, very conveniently falling sick, as each of them imagined, not long after the presentation of the gift, the old man took leave of the world. The quarrel he had predicted, and which he had contrived to keep at a distance

during his lifetime, now burst forth between the sons, each contending that he was the sole heir, and producing the ring as a testimonial of his claims. Great was their astonishment, and great was likewise the perplexity of the umpire, chosen on the occasion, to adjust the clashing interests of the claimants; the similarity of the rings would now have puzzled the goldsmith himself; insomuch, that after they were well wearied of the controversy, they consented to divide the property into three equal parts. And thus would I do in the very doubtful matter you have proposed to me, for all these professions are so exceedingly useful, that I do not suppose the wisdom of a Solomon could pretend to solve the difficulty, as to which, by its intrinsic excellence, is best entitled to the gratitude of the world:" and here he concluded his remarks.

"You have spoken, prince," exclaimed the vice-roy, "in a very satisfactory, and I think a very happy manner. And now let the prince of Salerno please to settle the rest; for if we may be allowed to infer a wise sentence, from the singular prudence and sagacity with which he has conducted all his affairs, we shall not be left in want of one now." "Heaven grant you may not," returned the prince; "were the premises true, the conclusion might be so

likewise, though I shall not take any particular trouble to disclaim the character you have given me, at the expense of stultifying myself, aware as I am of greater imperfections than those which my friend Bignan has attributed to himself. And to avoid, if possible, becoming tedious, I shall follow his example, by repeating a story I recollect to have heard from an old countryman of mine, who having frequent business in Norcia, received it from the lips of one of his relations.

“ There was a certain Annibal Fini da Urbino, no less distinguished by his capacity in civil, than in military affairs, of which, being a liberal-minded man, he had nearly the sole adjustment in Norcia. Finding himself one day less pressed with business than usual, he entered into conversation with several citizens, as he stood in the porch-way of the justice hall, regarding the conduct of the magistrates and governors of Spoleto. Some praised and some blamed them for the same, or opposite qualities ; one was too avaricious, another inhuman, and they were all in turn very severely handled in proportion to that love of scandal, which is so universally encouraged in the world.

“ Our friend Annibal, flattering himself that his

known liberality and love of justice had acquired for him the reputation of the most upright judge of Norcia, imagined he should steer clear of the sweeping censure pronounced against the rest of the magistrates, and thus accosted a countryman as he went by: ‘Martin, my good fellow, tell me, for the sake of this pretty ducat, which of the magistrates, think you, that has just left the court, has the best character among the people?’ Now Martin, who like most of his countrymen, was at once both as awkward and as cunning as a bear, directly replied with the utmost freedom and readiness, but without any thing of the graceful or decorous so much insisted upon by the prince of orators: ‘I shall answer you, good Mr. Podestà, as a certain neighbour did a customer who put a very improper kind of question to him. My neighbour happened to be in possession of four beautiful wolf’s whelps, one of which a villager had a notion of making his own, and with this view he began to haggle with him for the price, saying: ‘May I rely upon your pointing out to me which is the best, for I do not like to trust entirely to my own judgment, though I have a shrewd notion which is the best?’ Now the peasant, who well knew the savage disposition of such animals to be very much

upon a par, only answered with a grin: ‘Thrust your hand into the pannier, my friend, and please yourself, for they are all of the same kidney.’

“With this he slipped the ducat into his pocket and rode grinning away, leaving the magistrate to digest the spleen and venom of the reply as well as he could. Pretending that he had got business to despatch elsewhere, he turned directly away, and soon afterwards re-entered the hall.

“Now I shall here presume to make a second application of the good rustic’s answer to the very important business before us; and I think it may enable us to solve the difficulty regarding the four professional gentlemen at present in the custody of our excellent viceroy, and who, I take it, are pretty much of the same kidney. So thrust your hand into the pannier,” he continued, to the viceroy, “and take whichever you like to hang first; for they are all of them such complete proficient in their trade, that not one of them, I am convinced, would yield to the other, either in his desire or his capacity of doing evil. It is in vain for us to attempt to discover which is the worst, as it is altogether a most diabolical affair on the part of each. I fancy the father of lies alone would be enabled to inform us satisfactorily of this truth.” There was an universal burst of

laughter and applause at the close of this speech; their mirth was rapturous and overflowing; nor was their admiration less of the happy manner in which the duke had extricated himself from the difficulty imposed upon him.

The viceroy then finally addressed the company, observing, that each of the guests was now at liberty to entertain what opinion he pleased; for that this was, after all, the only plan he knew for arriving at the truth. Having said this, he proceeded to close the proceedings; and not long afterwards, with the most exact observance of all due forms and ceremonies, strictly enforced at the court, the guests separated for the evening, adjourning to repose their wearied limbs from the toils of the banquet, no less than from those of state, of a still more grave and irksome nature than the former.

Autore Ignoto.

AUTORE IGNOTO :

(BY AN ANONYMOUS NOVELIST).

DURING the late pestilence, which occurred in the year 1430, having occasion, on account of my own affairs, to stay some time in Florence, it happened that I, one day, met several of my friends at the lodge of the Buondelmonti. Among others were Piero Viniziano, and Giovannozzo Pitti, whom I found complaining of the intense heat of the weather, under the visitation of a fierce July sun, and touching, among other occurrences, upon the recent mortality caused by the plague.

I think it was M. Guccio de' Nobili, who first broke in upon this unpleasant portion of our subject, by observing : " Pray let us leave the dead to bury their dead, and the doctors to their sick, but let us, who are yet sound and hearty, try to keep ourselves so, by being in good humour, and enjoying ourselves as long as we can. If you are wise enough to follow my example, you shall have no reason to complain of the dulness and tediousness of the day : there

is nothing equal to a good feast and a good laugh for keeping away infection !” We all declared upon this, that he should lead the way, and we would abide by his direction ; when he immediately rose, declaring we must first seek some place rather more airy, and taking an arm of Pitti, and another of Viniziano, he invited us to follow him as far as Ponte Vecchio. We thence proceeded, in high glee, to the pleasant gardens of the Pitti, where we sheltered ourselves under the embowering arch of vine and jessamine, watered by a fine cool spring, where Giovannozzo provided a table of fruits and wines, of almost every kind, and in the highest perfection. After having partaken of these with no little zest and perseverance, our friend Viniziano, with one of his humorous introductions, commenced the story of Donna Lisetta, whom, as well as her lover, he, being an admirable mimic, took off so completely to the life, that we had some difficulty in preventing ourselves from dying with laughter.

Lioncino was the first to recover himself, and turning towards Piero with a look of mock defiance : “ Now is the time come, Piero,” he cried, “ that our long dispute must be settled. I am resolved to know which of us two is to be esteemed henceforth the best novelist. Our noble friends here shall

decide which must for the future call the other master, when he begins to tell a good story." To this his friend Piero having consented, the challenger smoothed his whiskers, and having swallowed an inspiring glass, he forthwith began: "If I mistake not, you are all pretty well acquainted with a certain Bianco Alfani, the same who is generally known from all other men by the diminutive epithet of lad, resembling one in every point, though he is really above forty years of age. Although he gives himself credit for extraordinary ability, his shrewdness and wit are merely such as are compatible with his boyish appearance, but by no means indicative of the sense and seriousness of forty. Such as he is, however, he was thought equal to the appointment of watching over the safety of debtors, among whom, by redeeming some of the poorer sort, and other means, he realized something handsome.

But being of a sociable disposition, more especially with the ladies, he soon contrived to dissipate the greatest part of it; and you shall hear the very ingenious way in which he disposed of the remainder. He was frequently in the habit, last year, of appearing about the new market, where, at a famous eating house, he was proud to entertain a number of young fellows, not quite so simple as himself, who

flocked together, like birds in pairing time, to pick up the best helpmate they could find. Nor was it the least part of their feast to listen to the vain boastings and complacent absurdities uttered by the simple host. Now it happened that a few friends and I came one evening to sup in the same house, where he was entertaining one of his usual parties, and we had the advantage of hearing, through our vicinity to them, the whole of their absurd and humorous discourse. But the worthy host far surpassed the most ridiculous of his guests in the folly of his remarks; and when we had heard quite as much as we wished, my friend Niccolo Tinucci declared, that good as it was, it was, nevertheless, no way to be compared with the still more ridiculous proofs of simplicity he had at other times given. ' You must know that this eccentric genius, having occasion not long ago to visit Norcia, obtained an introduction to my noble friend, Giovanni di Santi, who resides there; and repeating his visits on somewhat too familiar a footing, as I seldom entered my friend's house without finding him there before me, Giovanni at length became almost weary of his strange and wild vagaries, which he humoured with infinite skill, to the admiration of all his guests. In order sometimes to get rid of his company, my friend contrived to employ him in some

little commissions ; observing, for instance, “ Now pray inquire into that business, my dear Bianco, and let me have an early answer, and you may depend upon it, I will make it worth your while, for I see you are not one of that stamp to remain long quiet without meeting with promotion in the world ! ” — “ And what promotion am I likely to get among you people of Norcia ? ” replied our hero, “ Do you think I do not know your tricks ? ” — “ Know what you will,” rejoined Giovanni, “ but there are some of us who have sworn to leave no stone unturned to have you elected our mayor, the mayor of Norcia ; I think this would not sound amiss, my Bianco ? ” — “ It would be something to be sure,” returned the latter ; “ and to say the least of it, I think I could carry the mace as well as you carry that walking stick.” — “ Very good, Bianco,” said my friend, “ and we shall soon put you to the proof.” — “ So much the better ; you may do it now, if you please,” cried Bianco, with a very important face, as he hastened to discharge my friend’s commission. He had no sooner turned his back, than Giovanni, addressing me with a laugh, “ Well, signor, what do you think of him ? Did you ever see a more heavy and conceited ass in your life ? Though you see he gives himself credit for an extraordinary degree of shrewdness, he cannot help be-

lieving he is to become our mayor at the next election: yet he is scarcely fit to be a constable of the borough. Blockhead as he is, however, I will contrive to make him useful to me in my affairs, flattering him with the hope of his mayoralty, while at the same time I amuse myself with his extravagancies."

When the time of his departure from our city arrived, Giovanni, having already made him nearly frantic with expectations of the chief magistracy, escorted him with much mock respect, along with a few other friends, who were in the secret, several miles, as far as Bagno a Ripoli, and there they took a solemn leave of him, bidding him be of good cheer, for that they were resolved to go through with the business, and prove their zeal in his service. Our hero returned thanks with a very complacent and ceremonious air, not in the least questioning the truth of what was said; and we then measured our way back to the city. The next step proposed was to prepare a letter, as if coming from our friend, Giovanni, inviting him to stand candidate at the ensuing election, when he would infallibly be guilty of a thousand fresh absurdities on the occasion. "There is not the slightest doubt of that," exclaimed Messer Niccolo. "Then the sooner we have them the better," rejoined Messer Antonio, "and my acquaint-

ance with the Norcian dialect will entitle me to the composition of this precious document." In fact, the next morning he produced it ready cut and dry, insomuch that any one would have sworn, from its phraseology, that it could have been written no where but at Norcia. The tenor of it ran thus: "The question of your election to the supreme magistracy would now appear to be placed beyond a doubt, as a certain friend of great influence with the council has recently declared in your favour." This document was regularly copied and signed by a roguish notary, and forthwith despatched to its destination. It was delivered by the messenger into Bianco's hands, with a profusion of compliments and ceremonies, and after repeated perusals, he took the bearer of it courteously by the hand, and invited him in to supper. The messenger then answered all inquiries to our hero's satisfaction, having been well tutored by Giovanni to the task before setting out.

The ensuing day he returned in triumph with the expected answer, which Niccolo read aloud to us with a very business-like air, and much mock solemnity. It was just what we could have wished; he accepted the nomination, returning thanks to the good burgesses for this gratifying proof of their regard. To witness the progress of his extravagance,

we next resolved to send a deputation of gentlemen to wait upon him at the public prison, where he officiated as a sort of contractor with the poorer debtors, for their ransom, at a certain exorbitant interest. We found him treating with them for terms in a most ludicrous manner, interrupting himself at every other word, with a triumphant assurance that he should shortly be altogether freed from their impertinent solicitations, and obstinate folly. "Away," he cried, "in the course of another month, we shall see whether I am somebody or no." And this was followed by such a medley of similar expressions, that, finding him much worse than we had expected, we agreed that there could be no hazard in advancing boldly to the point. For this purpose, we indited a fresh epistle, still in the name of the said Giovanni, and further despatched by the hand of the same courier, containing the actual tidings of his election, and stating that a more formal annunciation of the whole affair would speedily follow. Until that time, it alluded to the propriety of keeping the matter secret, as it ought to be most formally announced both to the public and his familiar friends.

This soon brought a still more glorious answer than before, so complete a specimen, indeed, of the burlesque, that we resolved to put a finish to the

scheme. The mock election took place at the house of Ser Niccolo, the votes were regularly entered, and the great corporation seal attached to the letter, signed by the common-council, announcing the official intelligence of our hero's election. The courier was then commissioned to repair to the new magistrate and request him to hold himself in readiness at Pergola, three miles from Norcia, on the 24th day of July, where he was to wait the arrival of the colours, the dresses, and all the "pomp and circumstance" of election. This duty the courier discharged in the best style possible, for, pulling off his hat, streaming with ribbons, with his face full of happy news, he delivered the great seal with the most reverential air, wishing the new magistrate joy at a humble distance. Having perused it for a full hour, he began to give vent to his overcharged feelings by a thousand ridiculous acts and gestures. He presented the courier with a handsome sum, with the promise of a further reward when he took the magisterial chair at Norcia. He then hastened back to a party with whom he had supped as usual, and bursting upon them, not far from the spot where we stood to enjoy the scene, he exclaimed in a hurried manner, "Well, gentlemen, the time is at length come, when you are to know the extent of

my influence and reputation in the world." "Why, what has happened," inquired his companions, "have you heard any thing new?" "I am inclined to think this is new," returned our hero, displaying the credentials of his election; "if this does not lie, we shall soon see whether I know how to carry a staff of office as well as my predecessors. The truth is, gentlemen, I have just been elected mayor of Norcia;" and this he tried to confirm by a thousand extravagancies, occasioned by the contradictions with which they purposely provoked him. Then, in a violent heat, approaching the place where we stood, he took Ser Niccolo to witness whether our friend Giovanni had not promised, and obtained for him the high situation he alluded to. "Faith, I believe it must be so," cried Ser Niccolo, as he perused the letter, "he only tells you the truth, my good fellows, and if you are wise, you will bestow upon a man of his influence and importance every attention in your power." The whole company then vied with each other in doing honour to him, entreating that they might be admitted as part of his escort, when he should set out to enter on his new office. So our hero departed home to make suitable preparations, and then called on all his acquaintance, with the great seal always in his hand, observing, he came to take leave,

as he was shortly about to enter upon a new career. Great were the doubts and controversies which arose among his friends in Florence on hearing these tidings; but when they discovered him actually engaged in preparing steeds and colours for his retinue, they almost began to give credit, against the evidence of their better judgment, to the truth of his statements.

Finding that his ready money was scarcely equal to the magnificence of his ideas, our hero turned his thoughts to the sale of some property situated near the church of St. Mark, which a certain notary had long been desirous of purchasing. In order to obtain it on more easy terms, the notary began to flatter him with his splendid preparations and magnificent prospects, observing, that he emulated the noblest of his ancestors; the house of Alfani having always distinguished itself for its liberality in its public exhibitions and offices. "And since it will be an accommodation to you in your new affairs, I shall be proud to offer you what I once mentioned, though, should any of your other friends be enabled to give you more, you had, perhaps, better not think of my proposal." But our hero immediately jumped at this offer, and forthwith received an order on the bank of Esau Martellini for the amount agreed upon. The

whole of this was speedily employed in completing his outfit, on this solemn occasion, having to provide, according to the tenor of his instructions, no less than a judge, a knight, and a notary, to accompany his retinue. Before setting out, applications for minor offices flowed in upon him on all sides, and he made various promises to his friends, how handsomely he would take care to provide for them.

On the appointed day he accordingly set forward, the mock constables and other officers preceding him with their staffs, while the cavalcade, with our hero at their head, followed, with colours spread and trumpets sounding as they proceeded slowly and solemnly along. They first took the road towards Arezzo, and from thence to Castiglione, to Cortona, and to Perugia; at all of which places they visited the chief magistrates, to their infinite surprise and perplexity. Doubtful in what way to act, they nevertheless believed it would be the safest plan to shew every proper attention and respect to their countrymen. Leaving Perugia, they next arrived at Pergola, exactly on the 24th day of the month, as had been stipulated for by his friend Giovanni in the credentials. Alighting at the hotel, the host, nearly overwhelmed with the sense of the honour received, lavished abundance of ceremony and respect upon his new guests; but reco-

vering himself a little in the course of the evening, he ventured to inquire, what was the governor's destination, as he doubted not, from the magnificence of his preparations, he must be proceeding upon some high destination. Bianco, happening to overhear this inquiry, instantly answered for himself, that he was about to assume the chief magistracy of Norcia. The good host, upon this, testified the utmost surprise, and shortly again inquired of one of the attendants whether they meant to jest with him? "The chief magistrate of Norcia," he continued, "is a noble Roman gentleman, elected not more than a fortnight ago." "What is that the man mutters there?" exclaimed our hero; "the simpleton is perhaps talking of the governor, for, as matters at present stand, here is the mayor;" and he grew several inches taller in a moment. And in order to avoid further discussion, he commanded the great seal, with his credentials, to be handed to the unbelieving host. With a thousand apologies for his boldness, he returned the document, expressing himself perfectly satisfied of its truth, though he shrugged up his shoulders as he exclaimed, "I almost begin to think I see double; the idea of two magistrates has confused me strangely, and, perhaps, the best way of recovering myself will be to attend to supper." In great glee at having thus dis-

comfited the poor landlord, Bianco, turning round to his officers, observed: "There goes a wise head! he has drunk till he has confused the distinction in his own mind, between a governor and a lord mayor."

But the inquisitive host, still unsatisfied on the subject, had no sooner served up supper, than, leaving his nephew in charge, he mounted a fine blood mare, and proceeded post to Norcia, where alighting at an old friend's house, not quite sure whether he was out of his wits or no, he exclaimed, in a tone of anxiety, "There has the oddest thing in the world happened to me to-night!" and he proceeded to relate what had occurred. The other, bursting into a loud laugh, inquired whether he had really ridden the whole of the way to learn a fact which he was acquainted with before he set out. "You know as well as I do, you wise-acre, that the mayor was elected the eighth of the month. The man is merely making a fool of you, unless he happens to be a greater fool than yourself." "But how, in the name of all the saints, can that be," retorted the host, "when I read a true account of his election?" Thus conversing, they walked towards the piazza, where a number of citizens shortly collecting together, they proceeded to pass their opinions on the matter. Great was the perplexity and wonder of all; and by all he was

advised to refer the affair to the consideration of the council, accompanied by them, as vouchers to the truth of his statement. Fresh embarrassment here arose among the members of the council, and after vainly puzzling their heads to divine the motives of this strange proceeding, they came to the determination of despatching their president to ascertain the meaning of it. The latter, then, accompanied the host back, and still guessing and puzzling themselves the whole way, they arrived in haste at the hotel, and calling for lights, they sent in word to our friend Bianco, that the president of the council of Norcia requested an interview with him. Believing it to be a deputation to welcome him on his approach, our hero ordered him to be ushered in. Having moved to each other with no little ceremony, Bianco, turning round upon the landlord, observed with much self-complacency, "Do you think you can now recollect the time when the new mayor was elected?" "I fear you will begin to doubt as much as myself, signor, very soon," was the good host's reply. The president had some difficulty in restraining his mirth at this novel scene, but trying to put the most serious face upon it he could, he thus proceeded to address our hero: "The members of the city council, hearing of your arrival, signor, have commissioned me to

inform you, that they cannot but testify the utmost surprise at your pretensions to the magistracy of Norcia, the present mayor having been duly elected on the eighth day of this month; to the office he now enjoys. They would willingly, therefore, be made acquainted with the motives of this strange proceeding on your part, for which they can in no way account."

Such was the astonishment of our hero, on hearing these words, that it was with the utmost difficulty he stood the shock, as he inquired, in a scarcely audible voice, whether it was customary to elect two mayors at Norcia? The president replying in the negative, our disappointed friend imagined that he had been solemnly duped by the good people of Norcia, whom alone he believed capable of such a trick; his surprise and grief were suddenly converted into the fiercest anger and impatience; and handing the president the various letters he had received upon the subject, he inveighed bitterly against the council for refusing to sanction his claims, adding, "If these letters do not lie, I shall yet live to be mayor of Norcia. Should it indeed turn out that I have been bubbled either by the people of Norcia, or any other people, I will soon let them know where I come from, and who I am, and they shall pay pretty dearly for

their impertinence ; they shall learn it is no jest, and that the Florentines are a very different class of men from some whom they have to deal with. What, Mr. President, do you take us for mountaineers ? Think you, we shall put up with your skits and insults as they do ? we who have worsted the duke of Milan, to say nothing of others, who have longer claws than the people of Norcia. What will my fellow citizens say, think you, when they learn that you invited me hither to preside over your councils, and then elected another in my place ? Suppose I had not come early enough, what, in the devil's name, would they have done then ?" The president, beginning to be afraid he might actually become frantic in his presence, attempted various means to pacify him, and proposed to put off the discussion of the case to another time, observing that he would in the mean while acquaint the council with the state of the affair ; and then retreating behind the host, he mounted his horse as quick as possible, and hastened home.

He informed the members that he was not yet enabled to throw much light on the strange business they had in hand, owing to the eccentric language and conduct of the party concerned ; and that it might, perhaps, be the most satisfactory way to summon him before the council. Having resolved to

defer further proceedings for a little while, they learned that our hero was in deep consultation with his mock officers and other waggish friends, in what way to proceed, laying the whole blame on the people of Norcia, who had been instigated by the devil to the infernal act of inviting him to become mayor, and electing another in his place. Wearied with disputation and perplexity, all parties at length retired to rest, though our hero could scarcely close his eyes, for thinking of the dilemma in which he was, or if he slept, he only dreamed sad and vexatious dreams. The next morning he resumed his journey to the seat of magistracy, where crowds of people were collected to witness the novel sight, the arrival of a second mayor. But the procession was somewhat too lugubrious, as our hero's retinue had fallen sadly away, and he proceeded rather like a whipped criminal than a judge, hanging down his head, and looking in every direction but the right one. In this way he alighted at the council hall, announced his arrival, and at the request of the council, entered the audience-room, and took a seat near them. Being called upon to explain his business, he rose up as he had been commissioned to do by the pseudo-judge who accompanied him, and addressed the council as follows: " My lords and gentlemen, it is now

about three months since one of your townsmen, a certain Giovanni di Santi, invited me to become a candidate, and actually secured my election for the chief magistracy of your city. I soon after received intelligence of this event, as you will perceive by these letters under your own hand and seal. Desirous of emulating the example of my ancestors, in filling the most honourable offices, as I have been informed they did, I resolved to take upon myself the burden of duties and honours I imagined you had prepared for me. For this purpose I made the most splendid preparations, according to the usual custom, to enter upon my new dignity in a becoming manner, attended by a retinue which it required many hundred crowns to equip, as you may well imagine. What was my surprise, what my indignation, then, to learn from the master of an hotel the strange news, soon after confirmed by your own president, that you had elected another officer in my place! I am grieved to say, that such a proceeding is scarcely compatible with the honour and fidelity to be expected from a community like yours. Neither is it agreeable to the alliance at present subsisting between the Florentines and your own city; nor have you, as you perhaps think, imposed upon one of plebeian rank: no, gentlemen; you will be shocked,

when I declare that you have attempted to cast a slur upon the fair name of one of the respectable members of the honourable house of Alfani; a house, gentlemen, the most ancient and grand of our whole city; insomuch that you may justly dread the vengeance of heaven, which will not fail to overtake you. Yet, perhaps, if you will be prevailed upon to act a fair and honourable part, to dismiss your present magistrate, and place me in his seat, to heal the wounds my reputation has suffered, and reimburse me for my various expenses, I and my house may probably be induced to bury in oblivion what has already past. Thus, gentlemen, and thus only will you properly consult mine and your own honour; for here I hold the document received from the hands of your deputation: are you prepared to put in force its articles?" Strangely bewildered by this specimen of the mad oratory of our hero, the whole council rose, somewhat anxious for their personal security, while the president proceeded to answer his complaint in the most mild and soothing terms he could select for the purpose: "May it please you, most lofty and flourishing branch of the noble stock, of the very honourable house, of Alfani, may it please you to deign to retire for a few moments, while our council proceeds to debate the important question you have just

laid before us." Our hero then retiring, with no little ceremony on both sides, the good common-council men proceeded to examine, with anxious brows, the nature of the documents just submitted to their notice. What was their surprise and mirth at beholding this wretched forgery, a false copy of their own forms and ceremonies of election; but written neither by the hand of their president, nor sealed with their corporate seal. The judge, the knight, the men at arms, were all of the wicked Giovanni's own creation. Upon this the members unanimously declared our poor hero to have been solemnly burlesqued, in the true style of the mock heroic; and having indulged their mirth for some time, and commanded several constables to be in waiting in case of need, they ventured to recal the ex-mayor, to give him his dismissal. On his appearance, the president again addressed him: "Most noble sir, the sitting council has commissioned me to express the deepest concern on discovering the gross imposition which has been practised upon you, in forging the papers which you have here submitted to their perusal. There never, I am sorry to observe, was the least idea entertained of inviting you to take upon yourself the duties of our magistracy, neither are the papers sealed with our seal, nor written in the form of

our elections. Understanding you are sprung from an ancient and noble family, our council sincerely condoles with you on the loss either of reputation or of property which you may possibly incur, through the scandalous and unprovoked treatment you have received. We wish it were in our power to prevent your suffering in either, no less out of regard to your own person, than to the city to which you belong. But we are sorry to have to state, that we have not at present a single office vacant, with which we should otherwise be most happy to present you. Under these circumstances we would presume to advise" (for the constables were now at hand) "that you should, as soon as possible, think of returning to your own home; and consulting, as far as possible, your own reputation, which cannot but suffer by prolonging the discussion of this affair, no longer give yourself any uneasiness at what has passed." On hearing the termination of this address, so contrary to his ambitious views, our unhappy hero appeared quite thunderstruck; it was so heavy a blow, that it totally upset the arrogance and extravagance he had formerly shown. "My good lords and gentlemen," he exclaimed, with the tears starting into his eyes, "I begin to fear I have been sadly overreached; and all by that arrant knave and traitor Giovanni di Santi,

as a return for the good services I rendered him in Florence. Behold ! I have here letters under his own hand ; send for him, pray send for him directly, and first compel him to make me compensation for all my losses, for as to the rest of the injury, I think, with the help of my friends and brothers, he will never be inclined to repeat the joke.” “ Only convict him of it,” replied the president, “ and we will take care that he make you most ample reparation, besides giving him such chastisement as shall leave you little trouble in the way of taking revenge.” The rogue was accordingly summoned, a crowd of citizens following, inquisitive to learn the new magistrate’s fate. When he met his friend Bianco face to face, he testified the greatest surprise, as if he were shocked on beholding him there ; and when the cause of his arrest was explained, with a very sharp inquiry into the motives of so shameful an imposition, the prisoner only expressed still greater surprise, observing : “ It is true, my lords, that when I was in office at Florence, I received certain favours at the hands of my friend Bianco, here before you ; for which feeling truly grateful, I should have been happy to serve him by every means in my power. Something of the kind I also expressed in his presence ; adding, that I thought him every way

calculated to adorn so eminent a station as the chief magistracy of Norcia, and that I could have wished I had influence to procure it for him. But from that period to the present, I wish I may lose my head, if I ever heard a single syllable on the subject." Bianco, upon this, immediately confronted him with the letter, saying: "Now, my lords, we shall see with what face he will venture to deny this." Without the least hesitation the prisoner denied its being his production, and bringing a host of noble witnesses to back his assertions, the council, however reluctantly, was compelled to set him free. The sole remuneration our poor hero obtained, was the expenses of his procession, which, out of pure compassion, the council at length consented to discharge.

He then walked out of the hall, accompanied by his false friend, Giovanni, attracting the admiration and curiosity of the people, wherever he passed. The wicked author of the plot had the dexterity further to impose upon him, condoling with him on the very unlucky occurrence, and expressing his desire of punishing the perpetrators of so vile a forgery, who presumed to make use of his name, in order to ruin him with his best friend. On reaching the inn, then, our hero took a hearty leave of his best friend, and journeyed on his way towards Perugia, followed by

the sham judge, the knight, and the notary, all of whom had been hired for the occasion. Not having yet received the due reward for their occupation of such dignified stations, and aware that the enterprize had miscarried, they began to murmur, and unable to obtain satisfaction, they resolved, without further ceremony, by the advice of the notary, to make seizure of the ex-mayor's effects, the remnants of his splendid preparations for the procession. At his next stage, steeds, trunks, and trappings were laid under sequestration, by virtue of a pretended writ which the false notary served upon our unfortunate hero, in spite of his earnest prayers and entreaties to retain them, that he might re-enter his native city as honourably attended as he possibly could. The sole property left him was his coat of arms, his banner, and his lance, which he carried on his shoulders to Arezzo.

J. M'Creery, Took's-Court,
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